



# THE BRAILLE MONITOR

Voice of the  
National Federation of the Blind

DECEMBER - 1970

The National Federation of the Blind is not an organization speaking for the blind—it is the blind speaking for themselves.

## THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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If you or a friend wish to remember the National Federation of the Blind in your will, you can do so by employing the following language:

“I give, devise, and bequeath unto NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND, a District of Columbia non-profit corporation, the sum of \$\_\_\_\_(or, “\_\_\_\_percent of my net estate”, or “the following stocks and bonds:\_\_\_\_”) to be used for its worthy purposes on behalf of blind persons and to be held and administered by direction of its Executive Committee.”

If your wishes are more complex, you may have your attorney communicate with the Berkeley Office for other suggested forms.

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Printed at 2652 Shasta Road, Berkeley, California 94708

SEASON'S GREETINGS of the very warmest from the Officers and Staff of the National Federation of the Blind to all readers of *The Braille Monitor* from

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## MODEL CONSTITUTION FOR STATE AFFILIATES

by  
Kenneth Jernigan

Recently at the convention of one of our State affiliates I had occasion to sit in on a meeting of the constitution committee. The organization was revising its constitution and was using the recently adopted NFB constitution as a guide line. This reminded me that a number of years ago we drew up a suggested model constitution for State affiliates, which received fairly wide circulation.

In the past few months in our organizing efforts a new "Model Constitution" for State affiliates has evolved. I promised the affiliate constitution committee that we would publish the new "Model" in *The Monitor*. This article is by way of keeping that promise.

In general there are two kinds of constitutions used by our State affiliates: 1) The one most commonly used contemplates a State organization with local chapters and members-at-large. At State conventions all members of local chapters and all members-at-large are eligible to vote, hold office, etc. This type of constitution would seem to be best for all except the very large affiliates, those having ten or fifteen chapters or more. 2) Some States have a system whereby each local chapter has voting delegates at the State convention. In addition, the State affiliate often has members-at-large, who have voting delegates at the convention.

Under this system, each chapter may have one or two voting delegates, or there may be one voting delegate for every ten (or some other number) members in a chapter. The only problem with this system is that it encourages the chapters to pad their membership rolls or to be slow about removing names of people who no longer wish to belong. The delegates-at-large are sometimes selected in the following manner: The president of the State affiliate (or someone designated by him) invites every blind person to send nominations for delegate-at-large until a certain cutoff date. The seven names receiving the most nominations may be put on a ballot and sent to all known blind in the State (or to all members-at-large). Write-in candidates are permitted. The four names receiving the most votes are considered delegates-at-large. Their function is to represent the members-at-large throughout the State, or the blind not affiliated with any local chapter or otherwise with the organization. This, of course, is only one of the many methods which may be used to establish a delegate system, and other numbers may be substituted for those I have used in describing the procedure.

The California Council of the Blind, for instance, uses a variant of this system. (The Council is the State affiliate of the NFB). The latest Council constitution which I have reads in part:

### ARTICLE III--MEMBERSHIP

All members of the local groups affiliated with the Council are members of the Council and of the National Federation of the Blind, and have the right to present motions, speak on the floor of the Council, serve on Council Committees, and hold Council office; provided that no person shall become or remain a member of the Council or any of its affiliates, who is a member of an organization of the blind which attacks, undermines, or attempts to divide the Council or the National Federation of the Blind, as determined by the Council convention.

Voting shall be done by delegates and not by individual members as such. If any member who is not a delegate shall be elected as a Council officer or a member of the Executive Committee of the Council, he shall by such election become a delegate-at-large for his term of office. A delegate from an affiliated organization, if selected as an officer of this Council, may vote as the delegate from the affiliated organization or as an officer. The purpose of this provision is to prevent an affiliate from being deprived of the number of votes to which it is entitled.

Any blind person who is not within reasonable traveling distance of the meeting place of a Council affiliate and is not eligible for membership in a statewide affiliate or any sighted person may become a member-at-large, with the same rights and duties as other members. Determinations concerning reasonable traveling distance will be made by the President, based on the policies established by the Executive Committee.

The bylaws of the Council provide in implementation of this article:

ARTICLE I--DELEGATES, *Section 1. Affiliated Organizations of the Blind.* Each of the affiliated organizations of the blind provided for in Article IX of the Constitution shall be entitled to two votes on any matter. An affiliated organization of the blind may have two delegates, or both of its votes may be cast by one delegate. Every other delegate shall have one vote on any matter.

As I have said, the constitution which provides for delegates to the State convention is the exception, not the rule. Moreover, the trend is increasingly toward the other system. This is a matter which each State affiliate must decide for itself in light of its own geography, size of membership, and local preferences. The only requirements are that the State affiliate be a truly representative, democratic organization of the blind and that it abide by the provisions of the NFB constitution and by the policy decisions adopted by the national organization.

Here is the full text of the latest revision of the proposed "Model Constitution" for



State affiliates which wish to permit all members of local chapters to vote at State conventions:

## MODEL CONSTITUTION

### ARTICLE I NAME

The name of this organization shall be [name of State organization].

### ARTICLE II PURPOSE

The purpose of this organization shall be to promote the general welfare of the blind of [name of State] and the nation and to cooperate with the National Federation of the Blind in its various activities.

### ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

#### *Section One. Active Members.*

At least a majority of the active members of this organization must be blind. Active membership shall be of two classifications: active members who are affiliated with local chapters, and active members who are not affiliated with local chapters.

1. All active members of local chapters shall automatically become active members of this organization, with the right to vote, serve on committees, speak on the floor, and hold office.
2. Any person who is not affiliated with a local chapter may become an active member of this organization by a majority vote of the active members present and voting at a convention.

#### *Section Two. Associate Members.*

Any person may be elected to associate membership in this organization. Associate members shall have all the rights and privileges of active members, except that they may not vote, hold office, or serve on the board of directors. Associate members shall not pay dues.

#### *Section Three. Expulsion.*

Any member may be expelled for misconduct or neglect of duty by a two-thirds vote of the active members present and voting at any regular business session of the organization.

### ARTICLE IV LOCAL CHAPTERS

Any organized group desiring to become a local chapter of the [name of State

organization] shall apply for affiliation by submitting to the president of the [name of State organization] a copy of its constitution and a list of the names and addresses of its members and elected officers. When the [name of State organization], either in convention assembled or by action of its board of directors shall have approved the application, it shall issue to the local chapter a certificate of acceptance. Annually, on or before January 1, each local chapter shall provide to the secretary of the [name of State organization] a current list of its members and their addresses. At the same time, each local treasurer shall forward to the State treasurer the State dues for each member in the chapter. As new members enter local chapters, their names and addresses shall be sent without delay to the secretary of the State organization and their State dues shall be sent without delay to the treasurer of the State organization. No group shall be accepted as a chapter and no group shall remain a chapter unless at least a majority of its voting members are blind. The president, the vice-president (or vice-presidents) and at least a majority of the executive committee or board of directors of the local chapter must be blind. The president of the [name of State Organization] shall be an ex officio member of each local chapter.

#### ARTICLE V OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

There shall be elected at the regular annual convention during each even numbered year, a president, a first vice-president, a second vice-president, a secretary, and a treasurer. The terms of these officers shall begin at the close of the convention at which they are elected and qualified. Officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the active members who are present and voting. There shall be no proxy voting. If no nominee receives a majority vote on the first ballot, the person receiving the fewest votes shall be dropped from the list of nominees and a second ballot shall be taken. This procedure shall continue until one of the nominees has received a majority vote from the active members present and voting. The president and the vice-presidents must be blind. The duties of each officer shall be those ordinarily associated with his office.

#### ARTICLE VI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The board of directors of this organization shall consist of the five constitutional officers and four additional members, two of whom shall be elected for two-year terms at the annual convention during even numbered years and two of whom shall be elected for two-year terms at the annual convention during odd numbered years. At the meeting at which this constitution is adopted, two of the four directors shall be elected for one-year terms and the remaining two shall be elected for two-year terms. The four directors shall be elected in the same manner as that prescribed for the election of officers. The board shall meet at the call of the president or on written call signed by any three of the board members. The board shall advise the president and shall have charge of the affairs of the organization between conventions. At least five members of the board must be present at any meeting to constitute a quorum to transact business. The board may be polled by telephone or mail ballot on any question.

## ARTICLE VII MEETINGS

### *Section One. Annual Conventions*

This organization shall hold an annual convention, the time and place of which shall be fixed by the membership or, if this is not possible, by the board of directors. At least fifteen active members must be present to constitute a quorum to transact business at any annual convention.

### *Section Two. Special Meetings.*

The president of the organization may call a special meeting of the body at any time he, or a majority of the board of directors, deems such action to be necessary, but at such special meeting at least fifteen active members must be present to constitute a quorum to transact business and written notice must have been sent to the membership at least ten days prior to the date of the meeting.

## ARTICLE VIII COMMITTEES

The president may appoint such committees as he or the organization deems necessary.

## ARTICLE IX AFFILIATION

The [name of State organization] shall be an affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind and shall furnish to the President of the National Federation of the Blind annually, on or before January 1, a list of the names and addresses of its members and elected officers. A copy of the constitution of the [name of State organization] and of all amendments to the constitution shall also be sent to the President of the National Federation of the Blind.

## ARTICLE X DELEGATES TO THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND CONVENTION

The organization shall elect each year at least one delegate and at least one alternate delegate to attend the Convention of the National Federation of the Blind. No person shall be elected as delegate or alternate delegate unless he is an active member in good standing. To the extent of the resources of the organization, the expenses of delegates and alternate delegates to Conventions of the National Federation of the Blind shall be paid.

## ARTICLE XI DUES

The dues of the organization shall be \$1.00 per year payable in advance. In accordance with Article IV of the constitution, local chapters shall pay the State dues of their members. Members who are not affiliated with a local chapter shall pay their dues before or during the time of the annual convention. A lifetime membership may be secured for a fee of \$100.00. No person may vote who is delinquent in the payment of his dues.

#### ARTICLE XII DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

The funds of this organization shall be deposited in a bank to be selected by the treasurer with the approval of the president. The treasurer shall be bonded. All financial obligations of the organization shall be discharged by check issued on written order of the president, and signed by the treasurer.

#### ARTICLE XIII DISSOLUTION

In the event of dissolution, all assets of the organization shall be given to the National Federation of the Blind.

#### ARTICLE XIV AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of this organization by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the active members present and voting provided the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing and read at a previous business session.

\* \* \* \* \*

CORN BREAD  
by  
Kenneth Jernigan

What with spending my full time directing the Iowa Commission for the Blind and trying to do the same thing with respect to the presidency of the NFB, plus some participation in the State and local affiliates, I find myself moderately well occupied. Occasionally people ask me whether I ever think or do anything else. The answer is--sometimes, but hardly ever; and, of course, I like it that way.

Even so, there are moments. For one thing, now and again I like to cook steaks or hamburgers on the charcoal, and I have also developed a recipe for corn bread.

Let me begin by confessing that the basic ingredients and the beginning formula came from Anna Katherine. However, she was gone one day, and I got out the meal and buttermilk and began to experiment. I measured exactly, varied this and that, and had a fine old time. Several hours and several dozen batches later I had what I wanted--my notion of ideal corn bread. Most of the intermediate trial mixes went into the garbage, but the final recipe remained.

If you would like to try it, more power to you, and may you enjoy it as

much as I have. Remember that the measurements and the temperatures must be absolutely exact--no approximations.

Mix one cup of yellow corn meal, (the nondegerminated kind if you can get it) with one-half teaspoon of soda, one-half teaspoon of baking powder, a half teaspoon of salt and one cup of buttermilk. Get your oven to a temperature of 450 degrees. (Be sure that you get it that hot even if you have to use an oven thermometer to know). Use iron muffin rings or iron corn stick molds, and put two teaspoons of butter flavored Wesson Oil in each individual ring or mold. Wait 'til your oven has reached 450 degrees. Then put your oiled pans in, and leave them for six minutes. Take the pans out of the oven, and put one tablespoon of the corn bread mix in each ring or mold. Put the filled pans back into the oven immediately, and leave them there for sixteen minutes. Remove from oven and much joy in eating. By the way, the teaspoons and tablespoons and the cups are the measuring variety, not the regular kind.

To those who ask me if I ever do anything else: Yes, sometimes.

\* \* \* \* \*

## ACTION IN TENNESSEE

[Editor's Note: NFB President Kenneth Jernigan recently received the following report from Tennessee President Nellie Hargrove.]

Dear Dr. Jernigan:

I mentioned to you briefly in our telephone conversation the matter of Louise Stephens being dismissed from the vending stand program and the action on the part of the Tennessee affiliate in an attempt to help her. There have been some new developments in the case and here in more detail is the entire picture.

Louise was taken from a small stand location and assigned to the vending operation in the Chest Disease Hospital in Memphis. When she took over the new location she found that a considerable amount of the inventory was old and some of it useless. There were such items as nylon stockings which never sold. She asked to have the old stock removed but it was not. In addition she was told that she would be expected to leave the stand each day to deliver papers to the patients in the wards. In addition to this, she would be expected to take a cart into the wards a number of times during the week and sell various items to the patients.

Louise was asked to sign a contract which had not been filled out. She refused. She asked to be shown a copy of the vending stand regulations and was refused. She was notified that she would be dismissed from the stand.

Our State organization engaged an

attorney to advise Louise of her rights and to look into the dismissal because we were certain that she had not been treated justly.

The matter was brought to the attention of the Assistant Director of Services for the Blind. He personally visited the stand location and saw for himself that the situation was deplorable. He made a special effort to see Louise's side of the story. After reviewing the matter, the Assistant Director made a special effort to improve the conditions at the stand location. He has told Louise that the stand would be remodeled and the stock brought up to date and, if this is not possible, she would be placed in another location. I feel that he is sincere in his efforts to help and his actions are commendable.

We were prepared to go as far as necessary to protect Louise. I am certain that if we as an organization had not drawn the attention of the proper persons to the matter, Louise would now be out of the vending stand program. Fortunately, it has turned out well.

I shall keep you informed.

Very truly yours,

Nellie C. Hargrove, President  
NFB of Tennessee

\* \* \* \* \*



## MASSACHUSETTS CONVENTION

by

Rosamond M. Critchley

The seventeenth annual convention of the Associated Blind of Massachusetts, Inc., was held at the Parker House in Boston, Saturday and Sunday, September 26-27. There was a festive note to this gathering, as it marked our thirtieth anniversary, and Boston was the birthplace of this organization.

People began to arrive Friday afternoon, to be on hand for pre-convention committee meetings, and for some good fellowship and fun. John and Virginia Nagle were among the early arrivals. Despite John's accident last July, he vowed he would be on hand for this convention if he had to come in a wheel chair drawn by two guide dogs trained in the use of the long cane! He did, indeed, have the wheel chair, but it didn't in the least cramp his style.

The convention officially opened Saturday morning, with a keynote speech by Rosamond Critchley, ABM recording secretary. This was followed by a very interesting talk by Freeman Downing of the Lawrence Chapter, who, since losing the greater part of his sight, has continued to work as an automobile and racing car mechanic.

Afternoon speakers included Professor Edwin Lewinson, who needs no introduction to Federationists, and Dr. David Miller of Massachusetts General Hospital's Eye and Ear Infirmary, who had recently done a tour of duty with the famed hospital ship HOPE, and who gave a graphic account of his experience with eye

diseases in Tunisia. There was also a panel on modern trends in the education of blind children, moderated by Joseph Jablonski, a teacher at Perkins School for the Blind. Panelists were Benjamin Smith, Assistant Director of Perkins; Miss Marjorie Frye of the Massachusetts Department of Education; Ettore Rosati of the Rhode Island Commission for the Blind; and John Nagle.

Sunday was mostly taken up with committee reports and other business, including John Nagle's usual excellent report on Federal legislation. We also had a short but impressive memorial service for deceased members conducted by William Burke, assisted by Mrs. Burke. There was time for an explanation of the ABM's new group insurance plan which has been set up by Continental Casualty Company. We also heard a talk by Dr. Carter Tallman from the Low Vision Rehabilitation Clinic of Boston University's University Hospital, and a report of the NFB Convention in Minneapolis was given by Anita O'Shea and William Burke who served, respectively, as ABM delegate and alternate to that Convention.

As is our usual custom, reports from our nine chapters, telling of their activities and accomplishments during the past year, were interspersed among the speeches and other items throughout the convention.

The banquet on Saturday night was the largest in our history, with at least two hundred sixty-five present. John Nagle delivered one of his stirring addresses

which are now familiar to most NFB members. Afterward we were entertained by the Singing Nuns of Plymouth, two Sisters with beautiful voices and most engaging personalities.

The convention adopted a resolution commending Gregory B. Khachadorian for his fine work in the State Legislature, and particularly for his untiring efforts in behalf of his fellow blind. Other resolutions included the following: to send a minimum of one hundred dollars to the NFB Endowment Fund; to thank James Bossidy and other members of the Lions Club for their efforts to have the Model White Cane Law adopted in Massachusetts; to support a pending bill which would increase the salaries of home teachers; to

talk with the Commission for the Blind about the possibility of setting up a closed-circuit FM radio station for the use of the blind, patterned on what is being done in Minnesota.

This was not our year to elect officers, but the following chapter representatives were installed as members-at-large on the Executive Committee: Catherine Black, Boston; Anne Pendergast, Brockton; Edna Charette, Fall River; Richard Clark, Greenfield-Athol; Arthur Corbeil, Holyoke; Freeman Downing, Lawrence; Juanita Cassady, Springfield; Ralph Cushman, Watertown; and William Burke, Worcester.

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## WHITE CANE HIKES

[Reprinted from the Denver (Colorado) *Post*.]

Colorado's magnificent scenery holds a special fascination for a certain group of citizens who can't see it, at least through their eyes.

They're the blind and partially sighted who take monthly "white cane hikes" sponsored by the Colorado Mountain Club. Recently the gentle trails around Squaw Pass (elevation 9,807 feet) provided a daylong adventure for forty-seven hikers, nineteen of them blind.

They "looked" at flowers, bushes, and trees named for them by veteran Colorado Mountain Club member, Dr. E. H. Brunquist, curator of botany at the

Colorado Museum of Natural History. They felt aspen bark and daisy petals.

Mrs. Mary Hallock Wells, dean of girls at Kent School and widely known authority on mushrooms, led a mushroom hunt and identified the various varieties.

The Squaw Pass hike was the seventh monthly venture into readily accessible mountain country for the "white cane" hikers.

The trips were organized in January by veteran Colorado Mountain Club member Wilbert J. Moehrke of 1033 South Clarkson Street, who is partially



sighted.

He conceived the idea after going on an overnight with a Boy Scout troop in Little Rock, Arkansas. The Colorado Federation of the Blind, Inc., and the Colorado Mountain Club endorsed Moehrke's idea and spread the word of it to their members.

The "white cane hikers" have journeyed to Roxborough Park and Chatfield Dam, Waterton, Flagstaff Mountain, Mesa Trail and Mallory Cave.

Future trips are scheduled to Mt. Thorodin, Rampart Range, and Table Mountain.

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## TEACHING SQUARE DANCING BY BRAILLE

[Reprinted from the Berkeley (California) *Daily Gazette*.]

How does a blind instructor manage to teach square dancing to a class of blind students?

It takes a bit of doing, admits Mrs. Grace Rodriguez, popular physical education teacher at the State Orientation Center for the Blind in Albany, especially since until now, no teaching manual on the subject has been available in Braille.

"I've had to depend entirely on my memory," she said. She was limited to teaching dances she already knew and remembered, or those which had been explained to her and she had painstakingly memorized.

From now on her job will be much easier, thanks to the work of Mrs. Delbert Hansen and Mrs. George Hottle, Braille Department volunteers in the Berkeley-Albany Red Cross, who recently transcribed the Braille reference book she needed so badly, MODERN SQUARE DANCING by Patricia Phillips and Dick Leger.

The four large Brailled volumes in loose leaf bindings took several months to prepare. Outwardly they bear little resemblance to the two thin paperback originals, but inside are the same detailed instructions for many of the most popular square dances—a veritable gold mine of new material for blind teachers and "callers." Copies will be made available by the Library of Congress to the blind throughout the United States.

"It's going to be a wonderful help. Now I can learn new dances and brush up on the old ones whenever I need to," commented Mrs. Rodriguez when Mrs. Hansen delivered the books to her and stayed to watch them put in use.

Fond of dancing herself, petite, attractive Mrs. Rodriguez especially enjoys teaching her beginner's class in square dancing "because they're so enthusiastic," she says. She also teaches other physical education courses and classes in "living skills," which include personal grooming, care of the clothing, and other techniques

of daily life that help the blind live independently in a sighted world.

Red Cross Braillists transcribe and

bind approximately four hundred volumes each year, the materials ranging from music to mathematics and including foreign language works.

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## SOCIETY'S USE OF FUNDS CHALLENGED BY VENDORS

by

Timothy Hutchens

[Reprinted from the Washington (D. C. ) *Evening Star*. ]

Blind operators of vending stands in government buildings here have asked for a court accounting of what they contend is about \$500,000 "unreasonably accumulated" by the Washington Society for the Blind.

The D. C. Stand Operators Association, claiming to represent about half the city's eighty blind vending merchants, complains the society is not using funds accumulated from charges against the vending stands to benefit the blind persons running them.

Milton Perry, president, and George R. Reed, vice-president of the operators' association, said in an interview that the operators annually pay the society nine per cent of their gross receipts, or about \$340,000.

The society provides managerial services for the vending stand program under agreement with the District government as permitted by the Randolph-Sheppard Act which gives blind persons preference in operating vending stands in Federal buildings.

The complaint filed in U. S. District Court asks that the society be removed as the fund trustee and that a new trustee be directed to distribute the funds to benefit blind persons who have worked in the program.

Stand operators have sought in meetings with William H. Dyer, a director of the nonprofit society, to have the accumulated funds used for the benefit of those the program employs, particularly for setting up a retirement plan, according to the papers.

But the society has refused, the suit said, and has continued to accumulate the funds and invest them in various financial institutions, including the Perpetual Building Association, of which Dyer is executive vice-president.

Dyer refused to comment on the pending suit. But a response to the complaint filed in the court denied unreasonable accumulation of large sums and asserted that the funds referred to in the complaint belong solely to the society.

The society's philosophy has been to

establish blind persons in businesses where they can become economically self-sufficient, rather than charity beneficiaries, the answer said.

The society trains stand operators, supervises stocking and initial operations, and performs other services, it said. For this, the society is paid fees which along with charitable donations, grants, and other income are used to aid additional blind persons.

"Funds thus accumulated must be used for the blind as the directors see fit, and not limited to a retirement plan for blind persons already established in business," the papers said.

The society argued the charges against the vending stand operations had been reasonable for the services given, and that the compensation is established in a contract between the society and the city government.

The papers acknowledge that the society has funds drawing interest in various financial institutions, including Perpetual.

The agreement calls for the society to

maintain and replace stand equipment, purchase new equipment, provide management services, and assure a fair return to operators with failing businesses.

But speaking as president of the operators association, Perry said the society repairs equipment poorly and does not replace it until it breaks down.

Also, he said that the society's accounting fouls up monthly settlement statements and pay-checks for the operators, and provides assistants who are "invariably unclean in body and clothing, incompetent, careless, ill-mannered, and discourteous, slow and unwilling workers. Oftentimes they are discovered thieving."

The operators have also complained of discrimination in the society.

"During thirty years of managerial supervision of the vending stand program in the District of Columbia," according to an association statement, "the Washington Society has never found one blind person it considered qualified to act in any capacity in the program except as the operator of a stand."

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## NEW HAMPSHIRE CONVENTION

by  
William Higgins

On September 26, 1970, the New Hampshire Federation of the Blind opened a two-day convention at the Sheraton-Carpenter Hotel, Manchester,

New Hampshire, with Alfred Beckwith, State president, presiding. Following the invocation by Reverend Gendron, the president introduced the following

speakers: Miss Eileen Keim, director of services, Library Services for the Handicapped Division, New Hampshire State Library; Louis Gosselin, home teacher, New Hampshire State Department of Education, Blind Services; John Millon, vocational rehabilitation counselor, New Hampshire State Department of Education, Blind Services; James Omvig, National Federation of the Blind, Des Moines, Iowa; Mrs. Helen Hutchins, member, Merrimack Valley Chapter of the Blind, who spoke of her experiences with her new glasses obtained this summer from Dr. William Feinbloom, New York City.

State President Alfred Beckwith gave a brief report on the National Convention held in Minnesota this summer. Attorney Omvig spoke at great length on the many programs that Iowa has for the handicapped and, to this writer, there seemed to be many shared concerns.

A delicious banquet was served to about eighty members and invited guests. Greetings were brought by Mr. Saul Feldman, representing Governor Walter Peterson; Alderman Martineau, representing the mayor of Manchester; and Franklin VanVliet, Treasurer, National

Federation of the Blind. The keynote address was given by Mr. Omvig.

President Beckwith opened the business meeting, held on September 27th, with his annual report. Reports were given by the following officers: Hollis Little, State secretary; Annette Lamontagne, State treasurer; Edna Heaps, president, Gate City Chapter; and William Higgins, president, Merrimack Valley Chapter.

The following officers were elected to serve in the State chapter: president, William Higgins; first vice-president, Franklin VanVliet; second vice-president, Edmond Nadeau; secretary, Hollis Little; and treasurer, Anne Lamontagne. Elected to serve as board members were: Edward Vachon, three years; and Helen Hutchins, to fill William Higgins' unexpired term of two years.

Appointed to serve as chairman of the fundraising committee was Mrs. Suzanne Higgins.

The 1971 convention will be held in Keene, New Hampshire, and it was voted to hold the 1972 convention in Concord.

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## NO DISCRIMINATION

by

Kenneth Jernigan

Recently a blind woman of my acquaintance called a radio station to say, among other things, that she did not know why I insisted upon talking about discriminations against the blind. As she

put it, "I have been blind for a long time, and I have never been discriminated against. Of course, when blind persons apply for jobs, employers have some natural caution; but I don't really believe

there is any actual discrimination.”

It may be, of course, that the lady was making this sort of argument only as a vehicle for a personal attack upon me (a laudable enough thing perhaps in its own way). On the other hand, she may really have believed what she was saying. At least, this is the kind of thing I hear from a surprisingly large number of apparently enlightened people, blind and sighted alike.

This, of course, goes to the very heart of the question as to whether we need an organized blind movement. If there is really no discrimination or massive public misunderstanding, if the primary problem is the blindness itself and the agencies for the blind can meet that problem with professional services or (even assuming discrimination) if public attitudes are absolutely unchangeable—if all of these things are true, then it is certainly a waste of time to have a National Federation of the Blind. But the facts are that these things are not true. The agencies for the blind either cannot or will not undertake court actions to secure the rights of the blind, and they give comparatively little emphasis to the primary problem—namely, the public misconceptions and misunderstandings which exist and the discriminations which result. Unfortunately too many of the blind also fail to see the problem in its true perspective. Otherwise, how could one explain the statement of the blind lawyer who said: “I do not want to be a caustic. I just want to practice my profession, come home to my wife and children at night, and live a regular life.” How could one explain the fact that it is sometimes easier to get blind people together for recreation than for serious projects of the

movement?

With these things in mind, I would like to share with you part of a letter which I recently received from a blind person who was, at the time, working as the program director for a radio station:

*Dear Mr. Jernigan:*

*I have been a reader of The Braille Monitor for almost a year, and on this sleepy Saturday I decided to respond to a couple of points brought up in a recent issue of the magazine. First, I am happy to see that the Federation is disturbed by the slant of public services material released by agencies representing the blind. I have been in broadcasting for thirteen years. The last seven years I have occupied the position of program director at two radio stations in . . . . Over the years my handy wastebasket has served as a convenient receptacle for much material on and about blindness and blind people. Rarely have I encountered material which did not resort to the emotions of the listener. Everybody seems to think the only way to get people's attention is to resort to the slant of sensation or sorrow. These “wonder or wail” announcements only continue to set us apart, either as amazing freaks or heartbreaking examples of humanity at its most pitiful.*

*Perhaps I believe too much in the good intentions of people, but I cannot believe that these groups deliberately wish to do us harm—and yet I have not been able to think of a way creatively to direct their energies to our good. The Lions Clubs, for example, exert an enormous amount of energy in raising money and pride themselves on supplying Christmas gifts to every blind person in our county,*



*whether he needs or wants them. (If a person is blind he is automatically catalogued under their imposed image of what a blind person is—namely, a poor unfortunate to whom big brother Lion supplies a few material pleasures he could not possibly supply for himself )*

*I do not wish to be unfair. I know that enlightened Lions and informed Lions Clubs exist, but unless I live in a unique section of the country, this enlightenment is the unfortunate exception rather than the greatly needed rule.*

*I still cringe when I remember my first unfortunate Christmas in . . . My staff had gradually relaxed into accepting a blind man as its leader. Then Christmas Eve came, and my secretary ushered into my office a member of the local Lions Club, bearing a basket of goodies. Well, what do you do—tell him to get the hell out of there? Then, surely he and perhaps my staff, too, would have considered me rude and ungrateful. Before he could present the gift personally to me as a blind person, I hastened to praise the club's thoughtfulness in bringing a basket to the radio station staff for our help during the past year, and instructed my secretary to place the basket under the tree for all to enjoy.*

*You can imagine the laugh I got when one of my announcers came to my office later that day and rather sheepishly asked me what I wanted done with the two bars of soap and the package of razor blades he had found under a big red apple.*

*Over the years many individuals in these clubs have come to me as businessmen interested in a creative advertising campaign. They have respected*

*my judgment. Many have placed their budgets in my hands to spend to their advantage; yet, as a club they fall back into the pattern. Of the many talks I have made to these clubs, tactfully suggesting ways their energy could be used in an extensive information campaign, none has been able to wrench them free of their "blind fund," their "blind committee," their "blind work"; and I have always left feeling I could never free them of their "blind conceptions." And yet, all of that Lions energy—.*

*The same must also be the case with other clubs who deal so shabbily with the real needs of blind folks. I have come to the conclusion that the only way to do it is to do it ourselves—and this brings me to my offer if it is needed. I have a holding company on the side which produces custom commercials. If I may be of any service in the work your organization plans to do in the way of publicity, you need only say the word. . . .*

*The writer of this thoughtful letter is totally blind, in his thirties, married, and the father of two children. As he has seen small radio stations lowering their standards and having other problems, he has become increasingly troubled about what he wanted his future career to be. I think you will find his comments along this line both interesting and relative:*

*I realized finally that I must leave this situation in which I was not being permitted to do work I could take pride in. I submitted my material to bigger stations, who liked it and were ready to place me until the blindness factor arose. Then all hell erupted. The fact that I submitted material they liked was of no consequence when the blindness factor*

*entered the situation. They simply did not want "to take a chance."*

*I began to think of public relations work, although my public relations experience was limited. I had produced several educational documentaries for the local community college, whose president consulted me quite often on the subject of publicity campaigns. Yet, when funds were available to retain a public relations director and a board member hastily*

*recommended me for the position, this president who had consulted me, conclusively and immediately gave a flat "no": "He simply could not do it," he said. "He is blind."*

No need for an organized blind movement? No serious work to do—only recreation and coffee and cake? No need as successful blind persons to become involved? No discrimination?

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### NEW MEXICO FEDERATIONIST HONORED

[Reprinted from *The New Mexican*, Santa Fe (New Mexico). Miss Gomez is the first vice-president of the New Mexico Federation of the Blind.]

Pauline Gomez has been named the National Runner-up for Handicapped Professional Woman of the Year co-sponsored by Pilot International and the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped.

The plaque citing the award was presented to Martha Lebow, president of Pilot Club of Santa Fe, for Miss Gomez in Miami, Florida at the Pilot International Convention.

Miss Gomez, who has been blind since shortly after her birth, owns and operates a kindergarten in Santa Fe. She was the first blind student to attend the University of New Mexico and has continued her education throughout the

twenty-four years she has been teaching. Active in the New Mexico Federation for the Blind, she was recently named chairman of the National Blind Teachers of the National Federation of the Blind.

Nominated by Pilot Club of Santa Fe, Miss Gomez was selected as the Handicapped Professional Woman of the Year in district nine at the Pilot Club regional convention in Denver last May and entered the national competition to be runner-up.

Pilot International consists of over five hundred clubs and fifteen thousand professional women in the United States and the world.

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## TWIN VISION WINS AWARD FOR SERVICE

[Reprinted from the Van Nuys (California) News ]

For the second consecutive year, Twin Vision Publishing Division of the American Brotherhood for the Blind has been awarded a citation by the Lane Bryant Volunteer Awards committee, according to Jerome E. Klein, director. Klein said the group is now a candidate for the final awards.

Only twenty per cent of those nominated met a rigid screening process, and are now in consideration for the awards Klein said. Citationists are selected by a faculty panel from Long Island University; the awards recipients are selected by a group of judges.

The Lane Bryant Volunteer Awards

were instituted in 1948 to encourage voluntary participation in a variety of fields beneficial to the American community.

Twin Vision services for which the citation was awarded include books in print and Braille, Great Documents series, and original books with raised illustrations, *Hot-Line to Deaf-Blind*—published twice a month so that those without sight or hearing may keep informed on current events, Braille calendars with holidays noted, and the Twin Vision Lending Library serving the United States and Canada.

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## NEW YORK CONVENTION

by  
William Dwyer

The 15th Annual Convention of the Empire State Association of the Blind was held at the Treadway Motor Inn, Niagara Falls, New York over the Columbus Day weekend. Bill Focazio, convention chairman, got things off to a flying start by providing a well-stocked hospitality room on Friday evening. Sam Lentine, president of the host chapter, is State chairman of the Ham Radio Operators Committee whose project is to organize a statewide network of ham radio operators to insure speedy communication between

chapters on legislative bulletins and other pertinent data. Sam had a unit set up in the exhibit room and throughout the weekend, when the time allowed, he was broadcasting and receiving radio messages throughout the entire country.

After the usual welcoming addresses were delivered those assembled heard the NFB Minneapolis Convention report by Sam Lentine, followed by reports of the various committee chairmen. The highlight of the business sessions was when our NFB



representative, Manuel Urena, Assistant Director of the Iowa Commission for the Blind, served as moderator of a panel discussion. Panel members were Miss Elizabeth J. Smith, Senior Rehabilitation Counselor of the New York State Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped and Mr. Terry Mortarelli, Peripatologist of the Niagara Frontier Rehabilitation Center. Two members of the CNIB asked to be excused at the last minute.

The bright spot of the entire convention was at the banquet on Sunday when Manuel Urena removed his moderator's hat and donned his orator's hat to deliver a thought-provoking address which had many of the members still commenting at Monday's session. Congressman Smith, who has many friends in the Buffalo and Niagara chapters honored us with his presence at our banquet and spoke briefly on observations he made at the convention. We urged the good Congressman to be sure and contact John Nagle before voting on any legislation relating to the blind.

Two-and-a-half-year-old Maria Elaina Mohl, our youngest member, was accompanied by her parents and her

grandparents; making three generations of the Young family present at our convention. Maria Elaina stole the show; when during the discussion of a resolution or committee report she would give out with a lusty "aye" vote or a good loud hurrah, whichever happened to strike her fancy. Many long hard hours of work were put in by the various committees in seeking solutions to problems. However, everyone will agree they were counterbalanced by the drawing of dozens of door prizes plus a bus tour and a dance orchestra for two evenings.

The State president announced at the banquet that he had pledged one hundred dollars to the Dr. Jacobus tenBroek Memorial Endowment Fund at the Minneapolis Convention. A collection, which netted one hundred two dollars, was taken from the one hundred seven attending the banquet.

The Niagara Falls convention will be fondly remembered by those members and their friends who attended. Hard work, healthy fun, and harmony prevailed throughout the weekend. The 1971 convention will be held at the Sheriton Intowne Motor Inn, Albany, New York.

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## SOME THOUGHTS ON THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

by  
Perry Sundquist

As 1971 looms just ahead, and the Legislatures of most of our States will be in general sessions, this may be an appropriate time to remind those taking

the leadership in our State affiliates and local chapters in the legislative process of some of the lessons we have learned over the years.

During the past fifty years the welfare of the blind has increasingly been determined in Washington by the Congress and the White House rather than in the State capitals. This is so because of certain landmark Federal legislation: the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1920 and its main subsequent amendments; the basic Social Security Act of 1935 and its amendments almost every two years; the Randolph-Sheppard Act of 1936 and its amendments; and the Wagner-O'Day Act.

More than anything else, it was this shift from the States to the Nation which compelled the nationalization of the organized blind movement in 1940 with the founding of the National Federation of the Blind.

However, much significant, even vital legislation can only be achieved at the State level. "You win some and you lose some" is a catch phrase but actually, losing is nothing unless one profits from the experience and goes back the next time better equipped to win. And it isn't easy! A glance at the usual legislative process proves that.

First there comes the determination by the State convention of the affiliate as to just which specific legislation to sponsor, along with the blanket authority and mandate to try and defeat all bills which would be harmful to the welfare of the blind. Currently, probably the two major pieces of legislation for most affiliates are the enactment of a Commission for the Blind and the passage of the Model White Cane Law. Concurrently, every effort should be put forth to vigorously oppose all attempts to scramble programs for the blind in super-agencies which, unfortunately, is the

present trend in too many States.

The next step is the actual drafting of specific bills with their review for technical correctness by the Legislative Counsel Bureau at the behest of those members of the Legislature willing to serve as authors of the bills. In selecting authors for bills, considerable judgment must be exercised, choosing those who are real leaders in the Legislature and who will fight for the enactment of their measures.

Now, of course, comes the "nitty-gritty" of the process. Research and the careful drafting of written testimony in behalf of each bill introduced is essential. This is followed by contacts with members of the Legislature, oral and written, by those blind persons who reside in individual members' districts. Normally, there are hearings by committees in each House of the Legislature—two in the lower House, the policy committee and the finance committee, and two in the upper House. It is imperative that those seeking adoption of bills contact every member of each committee before which a bill will be heard, well in advance of the public hearing. If this pre-hearing activity has been well done, much less difficulty will be encountered at the formal hearings themselves. However, to the extent possible, the nature of any opposition should be anticipated and arguments ready for rebuttal. This is particularly true of opposition by the various departments of State government. This all adds up to a tremendous amount of work on the part of a lot of people—drafting of bills and testimony, letter-writing, and direct lobbying, etc.

There has been a markedly conservative trend in most of the States

and in the Nation for the past four or five years. This makes the passage of significantly liberalizing legislation in behalf of the blind most difficult. As long as this conservative mood continues on the part of the electorate, with its strong overtones of anti-welfare feeling, it is incumbent on all of us to take a very hard look at our past and present legislative

procedures to determine the most effective way of achieving results in the present political climate. What may prove successful in one State may not be as effective in another. Yet one thing remains constant for all—a lot of hard work by a lot of people. It is of such an ingredient that new laws are made.

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### WE'RE STILL TRYING!

[Statement of John Nagle on behalf of NFB before U. S. Senate Finance Committee.]

Mr. Chairman, I am appearing here, today, to urge Committee approval of S. 2518, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act so as to liberalize the conditions governing eligibility of blind persons to receive disability insurance benefits thereunder. S. 2518 was introduced in the United States Senate by Senator Vance Hartke, able and distinguished member of this Committee, joined by sixty-eight co-sponsoring colleagues, including nine members of this Committee.

H. R. 3782, a measure identical to S. 2518, was introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressman James A. Burke, along with one hundred fifty-eight similar bills. S. 2518 is also identical to measures adopted by the Senate in three previous Congresses—1964, 1965, and 1967.

I cite these statistics and point out this legislative history, Mr. Chairman, not to impress you, but so that you will understand that the Hartke Disability

Insurance for the Blind Bill is not merely the proposal of an organization, with only organization membership support. It is our earnest hope that with this record of Senate approval of our Disability Insurance for the Blind Bill, and with the number of co-sponsoring Senators and Congressmen of this proposal in the present Congress as a conclusive indication of continuing overwhelming Congressional support for this measure, that this Committee will again accept and approve S. 2518 and incorporate it into the provisions of H.R. 17550.

S. 2518 would make two changes in the Federal disability insurance law with particular reference to blind persons. It would permit a person whose visual impairment is such as to constitute blindness in accordance with the definition made a part of the disability insurance law in 1967, and who has worked in Social Security-covered work for six quarters, to qualify for disability insurance payments and to continue qualified so long as he remains blind and

regardless of his earnings.

Mr. Chairman, the purpose of S. 2518 is to make of the Federal disability insurance program a true insurance program for the blind—for those who are now blind, for those who will become blind in the future.

S. 2518 would condition the right to receive disability insurance payments, and the right to continue to receive them, upon the existence and the continuing existence of the loss of sight. S. 2518 recognizes that the severest of all the consequences resulting from the occurrence of blindness in the life of a workman is not the physical loss, the physical deprivation of sight, but rather, the severest loss sustained is the economic disaster which engulfs the newly-blind worker, the economic handicaps which are incidental to blindness.

It is these economic consequences: abrupt termination of weekly wages; diminished earning power; drastically curtailed employment opportunities; greatly reduced possibilities for advancement and increased earnings when employment has been secured. These, and not the physical loss of sight, convert the physical disability of blindness into the economic handicap of blindness, and this is so, whether a person is recently blind or has lived a lifetime without sight.

S. 2518 would provide a partial solution to the financial catastrophe which results from blindness. It would provide a floor of minimum financial security for those who must learn to live again, who must learn to function again but without sight in a world of sighted men. S. 2518 as Federal law, would reduce the competitive

disadvantages of sightlessness. It would provide a continuing source of funds to meet the extra cost, the "equalizing" expenses of functioning, blind, in a sight-oriented society and working in a sight-gearred economy.

S. 2518 would be of immeasurable help to the worker suddenly confronted with the devastating effects of blindness--the discouragement of protracted unemployment, the despair of an expected lifetime of unemployment and inactivity, the shocking loss of independence, the shame and humiliation of dependency. S. 2518 would also provide a special and necessary kind of independence security for blind persons, for whether such a person is a lawyer, a piano tuner, a teacher, a salesman, a vending stand operator, or a housewife, they must have sight available to them. Disability insurance payments would provide them with the needed dollars to buy sight, for we, blind people, have all learned that only sight that is hired is readily and regularly at our command and at our time of need.

Mr. Chairman, the usual blind person, with average abilities, with no particular talent or training, such a person works when he can get work, but frequently he is the victim of the inexorable laws so well known to all disabled people: last hired and first fired; and, when physically fit men are available for jobs, physically impaired men need not apply, for they will not be hired. Gainfully employed, when he is employed at all, the blind man is usually hired for jobs which are the shortest in duration, jobs offering the poorest pay, and even these jobs, these employment opportunities, are now rapidly being automated out of the

economy. For this person, the usual blind person, the twenty of the last forty quarters eligibility requirement in the disability insurance law makes the protection and equalizing potential of disability insurance unavailable to him, and the proposed six quarters requirement in S. 2518 would be much more reasonable, and much more realistic because of the special circumstances confronting such a blind person.

Mr. Chairman, we of the National Federation of the Blind believe that the Social Security programs which are intended to reduce the adverse economic and social consequences of advancing years and disabling impairments, must never be considered unchangeable in policy or provision, for such rigidity may nullify the purposes to be served by these programs, while flexibility of approach and adjustment of legal provision to meet special circumstances may assure realization of such purposes: the diminution of the hazards and the heartaches of old age, the lessening of the discouragements and the disadvantages of physical disability.

We ask this Committee and the Congress to recognize the special difficulties and handicapping circumstances confronting blind people, and we ask you to liberalize the disability insurance law for the benefit and assistance of blind people. Under existing law, a person must work in Social Security-covered work for five of the last ten years to establish eligibility for disability insurance payments. We ask you to approve S. 2518 to reduce this requirement to one and one-half years, in order that the benefits under the disability insurance program may be more readily

available to more persons when blindness occurs; in order that blind persons, unable to meet the present requirement of employment for twenty quarters in covered work, may be able to qualify for disability insurance payments under the Federal disability insurance program. Under existing law and practice, persons who are disabled and earn as little as seventy dollars a month, and sometimes, who earn anything at all, may be disqualified as insufficiently disabled to draw disability insurance payments. Under existing law and practice, it is not enough that a person is severely disabled, that he is unable to get a job because he is disabled, to qualify for disability insurance payments. He must establish his physical inability to do a job to be eligible for such payments.

We of the National Federation of the Blind ask you to change this, to allow persons who are disabled by blindness to draw disability insurance payments upon proof of blindness and to continue qualified to receive payments even though they are employed, even though they are earning and irrespective of the amount of their earnings, in order that disability insurance payments may be available to them to offset the extra, the "equalizing" expenses that must be incurred by them as they try to live and compete without sight in a sighted environment.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee: S. 2518, the Hartke Disability Insurance for the Blind Bill, has an ancient and honorable Congressional history. A predecessor to S. 2518 was offered in the 88th Congress Senate by Senator Hubert Humphrey as a floor amendment to the pending Social Security bill, and it was adopted by voice



vote without a dissenting vote. Another predecessor to S. 2518 was offered in the 89th Congress Senate by Senator Vance Hartke as a floor amendment to the pending Social Security bill, and it was adopted by roll call vote of 78 to 11. Still another predecessor to S. 2518 was offered in the 90th Congress Finance Committee, again by Senator Hartke, and it was given unanimous Committee approval as an amendment to the House-passed Social Security bill.

Earlier in this 91st Congress, I visited all of the Senate offices seeking co-sponsorship support when Senator Hartke introduced the Disability Insurance for the Blind Bill in the United States Senate, and as I stated previously to you, sixty-eight Senators joined on the bill, including all five of the Senate majority and minority leaders—Senator Dirksen had become a co-sponsor before his death. Believing that the same kind of massive support existed in the House of Representatives as had been repeatedly manifested in the Senate for the Disability Insurance for the Blind Bill, I visited all House offices, explaining the provisions of H.R. 3782 and asking for the introduction of companion bills as evidence of member support of this legislation. The one hundred and fifty-nine introduced bills identical to S. 2518 was the result.

The number of Senators and Congressmen in the 91st Congress who have indicated their endorsement and support of our Disability Insurance for the Blind Bill (228) certainly justifies my original belief, that this measure has the support of a substantial percentage of the membership of this Congress. As I went through the Senate and House and discussed the merits of our disability

insurance proposal, I encountered two objections to this measure: Why liberalize disability insurance for blind persons and not for other severely disabled persons? Why should a blind person with meager or substantial earnings draw disability insurance payments when other-type disabled persons are cut off from such payments if their earnings exceed one hundred forty dollars a month?

The answers to these questions, we believe, are simple, obvious, and conclusive: Blindness is not a worse disability than any other, but it is different from any other—and because of this difference, S. 2518 is socially and economically necessary legislation, it is uniquely needed and not precedent-setting legislation. A person may have just about any other kind of physical impairment, get repaired, obtain prosthetic devices or appliances, and be restored to substantial self-sufficiency. A man may lose both legs, secure artificial limbs, and after learning their use, function as he functioned before. The blind man, however, who must learn to live in a world structured for and by sighted people, can never reach a point where he is freed from a dependence upon sight—and this is so, whatever abilities the blind man may possess, whatever his accomplishments may be. And the blind person is just exactly like the sighted person—whatever his earnings, he lives above and beyond them—and is not better able to remove a portion of his income from family expenses to use for the purchase of sight than would his sighted fellows engaged in the same employment and with similar earnings.

The fact is, that whatever level of earnings a blind person may achieve, whatever position a blind person may

attain, a blind person functions at an economic disadvantage for he must function without sight in competition with sighted men, he must compete without sight in an economy based on sight. S. 2518 as Federal law would reduce this economic disadvantage. Gentlemen, S. 2518 is not humbly-held-hat-in-hand begging legislation. It is not a plea to alleviate the unhappy lot of helpless and shelter-seeking blind. S. 2518 is a renunciation of tradition-established lives of demeaning dependency of the blind men and women of this nation. S. 2518 expresses the courageous determination of blind Americans to escape from the centuries-long captivity of ignorance, prejudice, and discrimination and to live normal, self-supporting, self-dependent lives. I would remind this Committee as I have reminded you on other occasions--No blind person in this country needs to work, to strive to provide for himself and his family, or assume the responsibilities and burdens of full and active community membership.

And no word of criticism or condemnation would be heard of the blind person who accepts defeat and

dependency as his unalterable condition of life, and exists throughout his entire life upon the productivity of others.

But the blind of this nation reject as false and totally unacceptable the notion that blindness must mean utter helplessness and they are trying in spite of all difficulties, in spite of all disadvantages of sightlessness surrounded by sight, to obtain training and education, to obtain employment commensurate with their talents and occupational preparation, and to achieve full and valued lives, lives of value to themselves, to their families, and to the nation.

And I will assure you of this, Mr. Chairman, whether this Committee and this Congress approves S. 2518, the blind of this nation will persist and persist and persist in the course they have chosen, whatever the difficulties, whatever the disadvantages.

But with S. 2518 as Federal law, with disability insurance payments as a regular and continuing source of funds to hire sight, these difficulties would be lessened, these disadvantages would be fewer.

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## BLIND TEACHER 'SEES' STUDENTS' GOOD SIDE

by

Bob Gusetti

[Reprinted from the Pawtucket (Rhode Island) *Times*.]

On a door in her Providence apartment, there's a saying which Marieanna Pape often "looks" at when she feels in need of some inspiration.

"A ship," the sign reads, "is safest in harbor . . . but that's not what ships are built for."

The one hundred thirty-two Pawtucket area students who graduated from Rhode Island Junior College a few weeks ago can appreciate Miss Pape's occasional need for inspiration because she's a rather unique person.

She's a teacher of American literature and English composition at RIJC . . . but she's more than just a teacher.

She's totally blind.

"It would have been easier for me to stay in my home town in New Jersey," Miss Pape related, "but I have to find my own individuality rather than become a puppet."

So the Param, New Jersey teacher—in her mid-twenties—decided to accept an opening at Rhode Island Junior College last year after the doors of many other schools and colleges were virtually slammed in her face because she explained in her resumes she was blind—the result of an operation for cancer when she was just four years old.

Being blind hasn't proven to be a handicap to Miss Pape, however. The one hundred twenty students she teaches have been "fantastic" and "considerate" and Miss Pape is looking forward to returning to her second year at RIJC.

The New Jersey educator, however, has devised a system to make her role as a teacher less burdensome on others. To check the papers of students, for example, Miss Pape has two "readers" available—one person who reads students' papers at the college and another friend at Rhode Island College who assists.

Another way in which the students assist is to sit in the same places each day "so I get to know their voices and who they are." She added that the students aren't required to sit in the same places each day, but they do it out of consideration for her. She said after three or four days, she knew the names of the voices without too much difficulty.

Miss Pape, who underwent fifteen different operations for skin grafting over a two-year period while in high school, explained she has total blindness and uses a cane when walking.

As for going to and from school, Miss Pape relies on taking a cab but students and teachers "have been extremely nice," providing rides to her apartment about two miles from the junior college.

Being blind, however, does present some unique situations—especially in the classroom.

Unlike other college educators, Miss Pape couldn't care less about how her students look or dress—since she can't see them.

"What I'm 'looking' at is their minds more than their clothes, and what other teachers and parents say about students' appearance doesn't concern me," Miss Pape explained.

She said when she first came to the college, she was worried about having a discipline problem with the students—such as walking out of the classroom without her knowledge. But nothing like this has happened yet and she isn't anticipating the problem.



Having students whisper in class doesn't bother Miss Pape, but what really "bugs" her is plagiarism among students.

"I'd rather have a few of my own ideas rather than borrowing from others and I try to impress this on my students," Miss Pape said.

Cheating is no problem when tests are given because there's always a proctor in the classroom during tests.

Actually, Miss Pape feels it's an "education" for her students to have direct contact with a handicapped person. One student, she recalled, told her he wouldn't remember Thoreau—but he would remember a blind teacher "and that they are human."

Miss Pape has some other complimentary views of her students, noting young people today are tired of so many "plastic" persons.

"This generation is conscious of being sincere and in the basic goodness of mankind. They see the hypocrisy of

mankind. I felt like joining the black people in rioting after the doors were slammed in my face when I was looking for a job. I had three persons tell me they didn't want a blind person living in their house."

As for teaching college students, Miss Pape feels "this is the perfect age to teach."

Noting that many of her students are veterans and in the maturing process, "they're very concerned about the world's problems," Miss Pape said.

On her decision to be a teacher, Miss Pape said when she was an English major in college she also loved literature but felt it wasn't made relevant to life.

"I wanted others to like literature," she recalled, "and I felt this is where I belong . . . what I should be doing. I want to make a mark on the world . . . and maybe even make a ripple."

Right now, she's making waves.

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## INDIANA CONVENTION

by  
Bill Causey

The eighteenth annual State convention of the Indiana Council of the Blind was held at the Hotel McCurdy in Evansville the weekend of October 2-4, with the Vanderburgh County Council of the Blind as the host chapter.

It was one of the most successful Indiana State conventions ever held from the standpoint of business and social affairs and certainly the highlight of the entire convention was the presence of John F. Nagle, head of the Washington, D. C. office of the

NFB, and his lovely wife, Virginia. Mr. Nagle and officials of the host chapter invited U. S. Senator Vance Hartke to appear at the Saturday morning session of the convention, and this great friend and supporter of the blind in this Nation made a most inspiring talk which had many of his listeners in tears and drew a standing ovation. Mr. Nagle and Senator Hartke have been personal friends for the past twelve years, during which time they have worked very closely together to advance the cause of the blind. Eighty-four persons attended the banquet on Saturday night and heard Mr. Nagle make a stirring appeal for the blind persons of this Nation to demand their rights and to fight for them with the help and support of the NFB.

Speakers heard during the convention were Mayor Frank F. McDonald of Evansville; Vanderburgh County Auditor Louis Volpe; and Miss Donna Hagedorn of the Legal Aid Society.

Speakers in the field of the Indiana blind were Raymond F. Handley, executive director of the Indiana Agency for the Blind, who outlined his proposed program for increased services to the blind in Indiana and pledged his support and cooperation with the ICB; Superintendent D. A. Hutchinson of the Indiana School for the Blind, who showed a film depicting the activities at the school which has attained tremendous stature in the past ten years; and Mike Schelb, mobility training instructor of the Evansville Association of the Blind, Inc., who demonstrated the Belltone sonic device for the blind and who stated very emphatically the need for an educational and public service program to acquaint motorists with the white cane law. The constitution of the Indiana Council of the

Blind is believed to have been one of the few in the NFB which did not permit a counselor, home teacher, supervisor or similar official of a private or State agency providing services for the blind to hold office in the ICB. This provision of the constitution came under fire during the convention and by a five-two vote of the delegates was repealed.

Indiana State legislators and candidates from the Vanderburgh County area were banquet guests and will play an important role in legislation for the blind which will be coming up in the 1971 General Assembly which convenes in January. The major bill prepared and introduced by the ICB, the IAWB, and the Indiana State Department of Public Welfare in the Republican-controlled 1969 General Assembly, which would have increased the maximum blind assistance in Indiana from ninety-five dollars to one hundred twenty-five dollars per month, was passed by a wide margin and then vetoed by our Governor Edgar Whitcomb. That legislature also passed the model white cane law into statute.

Approximately sixty door prizes, as well as boodle bags containing over forty individual souvenir items donated by local merchants and chapters of the ICB, were given out during the convention.

Russell Getz, Goshen, ICB president, presided at all convention sessions and Bernard Hollander was the host chapter president.

The 1971 State convention will be held in South Bend with that chapter as host. John Janssens, father and founder of the ICB and who has helped pilot it through some of its stormiest years, is also

founder of the South Bend chapter.

at Frankfort of which Richard Reed is president.

A charter was granted a new chapter

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## IS STEAMSHIP TRAVEL CLOSED TO THE BLIND?

[Editor's Note: Following is correspondence between Mr. F. H. Fox of the Canadian Pacific Steamship Company of Montreal, Canada and Anthony G. Mannino, President of the California Council of the Blind. Two for one fare is offered in exchange for independence.]

Dear Mr. Fox:

It has been called to our attention that the Canadian Pacific, through its medical department, has refused passage on the Empress of Canada to Miss Naomi Shaw. This refusal and determination was made purely upon the basis of her blindness. This is a rather shocking revelation, since blind persons in the United States are not deprived of travel privileges on public conveyances. In fact, most of our States have laws prohibiting this kind of discrimination against blind persons, giving them the freedom and right to use public transportation as granted to sighted persons. Neither is there the requirement that they must be accompanied by a sighted traveling companion.

We know it is too late to again book passage for Miss Shaw, but we are wondering if consideration can be given to a revision of this discriminatory and unjust policy and practice on the part of the Canadian Pacific and its medical department. In my own experience, one of the safest places for a blind person is aboard a ship. The decks and passageways are easy to travel, with no dangerous

obstacles, with protective railings, and excellent personal service to ALL passengers.

We also wonder why such a decision is assigned to a medical department. It is already known that Miss Shaw is blind. It would be wiser if the evaluation were assigned to someone who is knowledgeable concerning the abilities and capabilities of blind persons. It is doubtful if these qualities are taken into consideration by a medical staff, and these are truly the determining factors.

We wonder what the procedures are in accepting passengers who might be alcoholics, disease carriers, mentally unstable persons or others who are in various categories which might be questioned by the medical department. We doubt that they would have any knowledge of the person because these are not visible handicaps. Yet, they probably are given passage and ultimately prove to be a greater risk than any blind person could possibly be. How is this permissiveness reconciled with the discrimination practiced against blind persons?

Not wishing to belabor the obvious fact that a very thoughtless decision was made in the case of Miss Shaw, or other blind persons, we hope to help remedy this situation through other channels of administration. Our sincere wish is that Canadian Pacific will see the error of its own course by dealing with this problem in a more just, realistic, and equitable manner.

Cordially yours,

Anthony G. Mannino  
President

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Dear Mr. Mannino:

Thank you for your letter of June 25, regarding Miss Naomi Shaw.

We are most anxious to provide accommodation on our sailings for blind persons, and to that end offer the inducement of one and one half fare for two passengers (a reduction of fifty per cent for the second passenger) when travelling as blind person and companion. Seeing-eye dogs are carried free on our vessel.

The safety and comfort of the passenger are prime considerations and it

is felt that the possibility of some unexpected motion of the ship, unfamiliar stairways and high steps on the vessel, are among conditions which can be encountered and which are hazards to one not in possession of sight, to a greater extent than prevails with a sighted person.

It is felt that the Medical Department of our Company is our best possible reference point and we are accustomed to call upon that Department to assist us in the case of any person suffering from a known disability.

We very much regret that it was necessary to decide against ticketing Miss Shaw and assure you that careful consideration was involved. A request for a blind person to travel unaccompanied is not received very often, and our decision was not made without consultation.

We trust you will understand our position and accept our assurance that we endeavour to be of service to all, and do indeed appreciate the points brought forward in your letter.

Yours very truly,

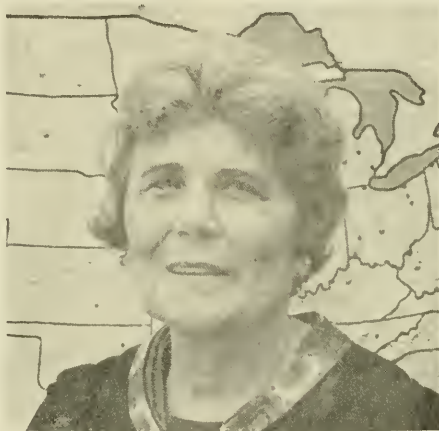
F. H. Fox  
Passenger Sales Manager  
CP Ships

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## MEET OUR STATE PRESIDENT--DR. MAE DAVIDOW AND OUR STATE AFFILIATE--PENNSYLVANIA

Dr. Mae Davidow, teacher at the Overbrook School for the Blind of Philadelphia, was elected the first woman president of the Pennsylvania Federation of the Blind at the Federation's 34th annual convention, September 17, 1969 at Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

Dr. Davidow, who lost her sight at the age of ten years following a mastoid operation, is a graduate of the Overbrook School, Douglass College, formerly New Jersey College for Women, and Temple University, from which she received her master's degree, and was the first blind woman to be awarded a doctorate degree. She is also the first woman graduate from the Overbrook School for the Blind to receive a doctorate.



Recognized as a leader in promoting increased social and economic status for the blind, in her acceptance speech to members of the Federation Dr. Davidow promised "renewed effort in working for the establishment of a commission for the blind in the State, and more opportunities for the visually handicapped."

Twelve years ago Mae reactivated the West Philadelphia Chapter of the Pennsylvania Federation of the Blind. Under her presidency the chapter grew

and the organization of new chapters in the Philadelphia area resulted. Through these efforts in 1962 Dr. Davidow was elected to the Executive Board of the Pennsylvania Federation, and four years later she became a Board member of the National Federation of the Blind. She was re-elected to the National Board in 1968.

Many of us remember Mae as a smiling switchboard operator who greeted us warmly when we entered the Overbrook School. Even during her years at the switchboard she found time to teach classes and tutor students, and take courses at Temple University toward her master's degree. In 1945 she became a full-time mathematics teacher.

Dr. Davidow has been chairman of the Mathematics Workshop of the Association for the Education of the Visually Handicapped, was president of the Overbrook Teachers Association, and a representative to the Pennsylvania State Education Association.

She was instrumental in establishing the use of the Cranmer abacus as a part of the mathematics curriculum at the Overbrook School, and in 1966 published the book, *THE ABACUS MADE EASY*, which has been translated into many



languages and is used by teachers throughout the world.

Dr Davidow has spent several summers conducting mathematics seminars at various colleges: Peabody college in Nashville, Tennessee, San Francisco State College, and Temple University. In addition, for the past two summers she has conducted abacus workshops at East Carolina College and Northern College in Aberdeen, South Dakota. These were in connection with The Governor Morehead School in Raleigh, North Carolina and the South Dakota School for the Blind in Aberdeen, South Dakota.

In addition to being a devoted teacher, her social service work has been outstanding both with the sighted and the blind. She has been active in leadership training at the YMCA, and as past president of the Midtown Chapter, B'nai B'rith, she has helped to write a manual for advisors to B'nai B'rith Youth.

As a result of two years of research, Dr Davidow has completed a modernization of mathematics in elementary and junior high school. She expects to publish soon A GUIDE FOR SOCIAL COMPETENCY, aimed at helping students, parents, and teachers of the blind.

In April of 1970 Dr Davidow received an Achievement Award from Phi Delta Gamma, the women's scholarship fraternity. The Award is given every two years and is based on a point system in one of two fields--in the field of the arts, and in one's career field. Mae's name was submitted in both fields--in the field of literature because of the books she has

written, and in the career field--teaching students and teaching teachers.

From 1928 to 1931, Frank Rennard, who is now the director of the Lighthouse for the Blind in Philadelphia, was the representative from the Blind Men's Working Home in that city to the Capital in Harrisburg; there he tried to persuade the State to purchase products made by the blind. Another organization existing at that time was the Amalgamated Association for the Blind of Pittsburgh. It had branches in Harrisburg and Wilkes-Barre. The proclaimed purpose of this group was the improvement of conditions for the blind. The Amalgamated Association was the forerunner of the Pennsylvania Federation.

The Pennsylvania Federation had its foundation meeting in 1931. David Treatman from Philadelphia, Gayle Burlingame, Frank Rennard, and Matt Dunn from Pittsburgh, and Frank Lugiano from Wilkes-Barre met in Harrisburg for that purpose. In 1935 the Pennsylvania Federation received its State charter for the express purpose of improving the social and economic status of the blind. The group had been hard at work before the official chartering and in 1932 the Legislature passed the law which provided the blind with a pension of \$30 a month. As in most other states at the time, the administration fell under the Mother's Aid jurisdiction.

The organization grew under its first president, Gayle Burlingame. It met regularly every two years--when the Legislature was in session. You all know that it was under Gayle Burlingame's aegis that the founding of the National

Federation took place in 1940 during a meeting of the Pennsylvania Federation in

Wilkes-Barre.

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## NATION'S FIRST TEACH-IN ON BLINDNESS

Greek Week, 1970, will linger long in the memories and lives of many Iowans, students, and adults alike, for the Nation's first teach-in on blindness. It was a week of "firsts". It was the first time that the Greeks (the collective name for members of fraternities and sororities) on any campus undertook a plan such as this. It was the first time that blind people and Greeks joined hands in a project of any kind. It was also the first time that the people of Iowa, and the rest of the nation incidentally, were on the receiving end of an effort of these proportions. The teach-in's purpose, as put by the Des Moines *Register* a week before the big event, was "to acquaint the public with the quiet revolution presently being carried out by the blind people of Iowa, through the programs of the State commission, with respect to vocational opportunities and wider participation in the community."

It all began about a year ago when Iowa Secretary of State, Melvin Synhorst, was asked by the chairman of Drake University's "Greek Week" Committee to suggest a speaker for the 1970 program. Secretary Synhorst, a longtime friend of Iowa's programs for the blind and their director, proposed that contact be made with Kenneth Jernigan. The Greek Week Chairman explained, when the contact was made, that fraternities and sororities wanted to sharpen their image by

involvement in creating and doing something worthwhile. Greeks are famous around the country for lending the needed hands to clean a vacant lot and make a playground; restore a house to use; various conservation chores; and financial help to a score of programs. But as Mr. Jernigan, having agreed to speak, asked questions, it became obvious that something besides an offering of physical labor was called for. The upshot was the "Teach-In on Blindness and the Blind." But more than the one-day teach-in was involved, for the theme for Greek Week became "Dimension in Sight".

The object of the week was to make an inroad on the public's attitudes and lack of knowledge about the blind and blindness. If the publicity planned was successful then the teach-in would need a large meeting place. The largest theater in town belonging to Station KRNT was obtained. This much done, the blind of Iowa and the students at Drake began their publicity campaign which grew to a big barrage during the week before the teach-in set for October 3. A one-page leaflet advertising the event was distributed by the tens of thousands—ten times ten thousand as a matter of record—by blind people and students. Blind people gave them to everyone they met on the streets, left them in offices, shops, department stores, restaurants, bars, hotels, and anywhere else they could.

The twenty fraternities and sororities divided the city into twenty districts, and each group thoroughly canvassed the residential area assigned in addition to the outlying shopping centers. During the whole week before the teach-in, the airways by sight and by sound gave forth a concentrated flow of information about the blind and the teach-in. The lead article which appeared in the *Des Moines Register*, on September 23, carried the names of some of the blind participants. Their home towns picked up the cue and a number of personal interviews for radio and television in other areas of the State resulted. Jim Omvig contacted the "Today" show and, as a consequence, the Friday preceding the October 3 meeting, Frank Blair's "People and Places" program highlighted the event and urged people to attend. The "Today" show people also expressed an interest in doing a future program about blindness.

Many other blind individuals did their part. Phil Parks, among them, called CBS in New York and talked with Harry Reasoner. He told Phil that the person he really wanted was Walter Cronkite, but Cronkite was in Cairo (Egypt, that is). But Cronkite's assistant sent Parks on to the head of the Chicago Bureau. That office said that if the local TV affiliate would take the pictures, it would make a good network feature. Phil Parks then contacted NBC and ABC with like good results. Other blind people throughout the State contacted their local radio and television stations. Many were interviewed on the air. Talk programs were called and the teach-in and blind people generally received much attention. Some stations wrote their own announcements for public service spots and some blind people cut tapes that made their way to news

broadcasts. The Des Moines bus company carried posters prepared by the Drake art people, advertising the teach-in. Shortly after one o'clock on Saturday, October 3, Kenneth Jernigan and other blind people, gathered for the event from throughout the State, faced a phalanx of television and other news media people for intensive interviews which involved showing how the blind use power and other tools as well as the general subject of blindness.

Arrangements were well done by the Iowa blind and by the Drake University Greeks. The place was crowded. Three chairs occupied the space on stage in front of the closed curtains. The three speakers who occupied them were Bill Wimer, Chairman of the Iowa Commission for the Blind, who made the introductory remarks; Ron Roark, Chairman of the Greek Week Committee, who talked about their participation in the program; and Kenneth Jernigan. The audience sat engrossed for forty-five minutes while the Commission Director spoke about blindness, its handicaps and characteristics; told them a little about the Iowa programs; but most of all, hammered away at the problems of blindness and what the public might do to help solve those problems.

Mr. Jernigan, being a man of action, was not content to lecture his audience. He introduced the demonstrations promised in the publicity. First came an exhibition of the use of the long white cane for which the Iowa program is world famous. Using the cane was Arlene Gashel. Sylvia Johnson, Travel Teacher at the Commission's Orientation Center, explained the cane techniques, and after the audience watched Mrs. Gashel find the steps leading from the stage to the floor of



the auditorium, they saw a short film showing her negotiating several complicated areas of the city.

Then the curtain went up on a partitioned stage alive with activity. As each section became the subject of attention, it was highlighted with spotlights. Ruth Schroeder, Home Economics Teacher at the Center, explained cooking techniques while a group of present and former students were mixing and baking cookies and pouring coffee using the coffee probe. Then Paul Hahle, Shop Instructor at the Orientation Center, demonstrated the ability of his blind students. Using a variety of power tools, the students rapidly and with great dexterity turned out a finished bookcase. Skills in typing and taking dictation in Braille and reading it back were demonstrated while the typing teacher at the Orientation Center, Beulah Bartlett, discussed the problems involved.

The proof of the program is in the placement. Ample proof was presented to the audience after the intermission. On stage before drawn curtains were twenty-one chairs occupied by a panel of employed blind persons, each of whom took two minutes to talk about the job he was doing and the problems he encountered in obtaining and keeping it. When they had finished, the session was opened to questions from the audience who asked about everything and anything connected with blindness. Among those who participated in the panel were: Curtis Willoughby and Lloyd Rasmussen, electrical engineers from Cedar Rapids; Pamela Buckler, Onawa school teacher; Mary Medema, Des Moines teacher; Ray Benson, Des Moines; Richard Bevington, Altoona, and Donald Abben, Waterloo,

machinists; Julie Vogt, Des Moines, and Jo Ann Slayton, Coralville, both secretaries; Elwyn Hemken, Blairsburg, farmer; Sylvester Nemmers and Phil Parks, both restaurant operators in Des Moines; Shirley Lansing, Iowa City, college student; Ray Halverson, Des Moines, insurance underwriter; Barbara Vekre, Bettendorf, social worker; Garry Patterson, Des Moines, computer programmer; Donald Morris, Des Moines, communications consultant; Alice Schmidt, Mount Pleasant, music therapist at the mental health institute; and William Hortman, Des Moines, real estate broker. The local television outlet for the education network, KDIN, had filmed the demonstrations for airing locally on October 21 and statewide on October 23.

Concessions at the theater teach-in were operated by blind people. Other blind people talked with those attending as they came and went. That night at the Iowa Commission, the Des Moines Association of the Blind held a dinner which was attended by the Governor and three other members of the five-man Executive Council.

Greek Week's general convocation took place on Monday evening. The speaker emphasized that if there was going to be activity during this particular week and if everyone did not follow through by trying to change attitudes about the blind, that they were wasting their time. Tuesday's special event was the Exchange Dinner. Each of the twenty fraternities and sororities had a dinner with members of the other nineteen present along with a young blind person. A mixer dance, attended by blind students and college students, was held at the Fort Des Moines Hotel on Friday night. There was also a

road rally and a carnival. Money from those events went toward paying the costs of all Greek Week activities. On Sunday, October 11, Kenneth Jernigan was the principal speaker at the windup luncheon

attended by eight hundred people, including Drake faculty, alumni, students, and others. Here he reviewed the tremendous impact of Greek Week and how it might affect the future.

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## LEGAL RIGHTS OF THE DISABLED

[Editor's Note: The following paper was prepared for the use of delegates to the National Citizens Conference on the Disabled and Disadvantaged which was held in Washington, D. C. last summer, sponsored by the U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.]

There are about a million blind and nearly-blind persons in the United States and between a million and a million and a half epileptics. And, since heart disease is one of the leading causes of death, one can assume that there are several times that many citizens suffering some degree of heart impairment--diagnosed or not. Every year one hundred thousand babies are born with defects and many of them will need to use crutches, braces or wheelchairs all or most of their lives. A few years ago a high percentage of them died in infancy; now, their chances of having a close-to-normal life span are far greater. Every year, automobile accidents take greater and greater toll: of sight and limb as well as of lives. And every year the war in Viet Nam continues, thousands of young men--once strong of body--are blinded and crippled and maimed.

The principle of normalization would seem to be more easily applied to the physically handicapped than to any other group of disabled and disadvantaged. The crippled can be fitted with a prosthetic

device to substitute for a missing limb; there is no prosthesis for a mind that has never developed. A guide dog can enable a blind man to go from place to place almost as easily as if he were sighted; but the boundaries of the slum ghetto are insurmountable for many of its residents. The deaf must learn to communicate through a wall of silence; communication is far more difficult when the barrier is a wall of prejudice such as is faced by the ex-convict. However, the apparent ease with which the physically handicapped can be integrated into the total society may be more apparent than real.

Often the greatest disablement which must be endured by the physically handicapped is not the physical defect itself, nor the unavailability of needed compensatory devices and training, nor even "prejudice"--in the sense that that term is applied to describe hostile or discriminatory treatment of blacks, or welfare recipients, or people with a criminal record. Rather, it is the ignorance and over-solicitude which characterizes the attitude of many Americans toward

persons who are blind, or deaf, or orthopedically impaired: a belief that such poor, blighted creatures as these must be protected from the world, instead of helped to become part of it.

The stereotypes are all too familiar. One young man became totally blind at the age of fourteen, and was sent to a school where he could learn to make baskets out of cane. He was a miserable failure--the baskets he made were lopsided and unsalable, and his teachers despaired of him. But this poor, blind failure, after he left the workshop, successfully completed college and law school, and is now a lawyer and Chief of the Washington office of the National Federation of the Blind. His name is John Nagle. And he still can't weave a decent basket!

Epileptics, perhaps more than any other category of the physically handicapped, have borne the burden of public ignorance and excessive and inappropriate solicitude. (Barrow and Fabing, 1956). There once were laws in a great many States severely restricting or prohibiting marriage, employment, drivers licensure and the like; and providing for involuntary hospitalization--and even sterilization--on no more proof than the fact that the person had suffered epileptic seizures. (Lindman and McIntyre, 1961). However, in recent years public educational campaigns and the development of medications which can more effectively control and prevent seizures have combined to reduce the extent to which such restrictions are applied. For example, although statutes permitting the sterilization of epileptics remain on the books in a number of States (Ferster, 1966), hospital administrators and health officials insist that they are not

invoked--and have not been for some years--against anyone on the ground of his being an epileptic. The hospitalization of epileptics has declined greatly over the past several years, and continues to decline. (Lindman and McIntyre, 1961).

There is yet need--especially in the case of persons suffering from epilepsy--for legislative reform. In the last fifteen years a dozen States have repealed statutes restricting the marriage of epileptics. However, in at least one State (West Virginia) the marriage of an epileptic is voidable. Wisconsin and Ohio have pioneered in enacting laws permitting issuance of a special driver's license to persons who have a physical condition which may produce periodic loss or impairment of consciousness, where the condition is in remission. Dean Barrow and Dr. Fabing, authors of the leading work on the subject (1956) and of several articles on the epileptic automobile driver, have urged the enactment of similar laws in other States (for a more extended discussion of the matter, see Appendix A-7, Operation of a Motor Vehicle, in Allen, Ferster, and Weihofen, 1968). And it should be obvious that the insulting and scientifically unsupported hospitalization and sterilization laws still left on the books ought to have been repealed long ago.

#### FEDERAL RESOURCES

A number of Federal laws have been enacted in the past several years in behalf of the physically handicapped. In 1965, the Vocational Rehabilitation Act was amended to provide for greatly increased Federal funding: to encourage States to expand and improve their rehabilitation services; to introduce new techniques and

services--especially for the severely disabled; and to facilitate the construction, staffing and improvement of workshops. In the same year, Social Security Law amendments authorized funds for training professional personnel for the care of crippled children, for grants to provide up to 75 per cent of the costs of comprehensive health care projects for children and youth, and to expand the program of medical assistance for blind, disabled, and dependent children. The amendments also included liberalization of the eligibility requirements for disability benefits. 1965 also saw enactment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, providing funds for projects in aid of educationally disadvantaged (including handicapped) children; legislation establishing a National Technical Institute for the Deaf; and PL 89-239, under which a quarter of a billion dollar program of grants was authorized to launch a major assault on heart disease, cancer, and stroke. That was quite a year, especially when one considers that it also brought Medicare and Medicaid, and extensive appropriations to facilitate construction of community mental health centers and mental retardation facilities. Since 1965, amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act have further augmented the grants program to encourage the development and improvement of State services to handicapped children; authorized establishment of Regional Resources Centers to improve educational techniques, and the establishment of centers for children who are both deaf and blind (primarily those so impaired as the result of the rubella epidemic of several years ago). The Handicapped Children's Early Education Assistance Act was enacted in 1968 providing support for

experimental pre-school and early education programs for handicapped children. Amendments to the Social Security Act increased the authorization of funds to improve maternal and child health care and services to crippled children. Amendments to the Vocational Rehabilitation Act more broadly defined the target groups for rehabilitation services, including, among others, the deaf-blind, handicapped migratory workers, and the "disadvantaged." Other new laws established a National Eye Institute within the National Institutes of Health; authorized the Commissioner of Education to make grants to institutions of higher learning to foster development of special services for disabled or disadvantaged students; provided minimum wage regulation for handicapped workers in sheltered workshops.

#### ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS LAW

Perhaps the most important single piece of Federal legislation for the physically disabled in recent years is PL 90-480, which became law less than a year ago. In 1967, a national Commission appointed by the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare reported that "the greatest single obstacle to employment for the handicapped is the physical design of the buildings and facilities they must use." It found that more than twenty million handicapped Americans are "built out of normal living by unnecessary barriers": by steps and curbs, inaccessible elevators, steep and narrow walks, narrow or revolving doors, lack of accommodations for wheelchairs, too narrow aisles, the absence of ramps and hand rails, unreachable light and alarm switches, failure to provide raised lettering on doors and in elevators for blind users, and many



other such thoughtless and unnecessary obstacles. (Commission, 1967). The new law requires that every federally financed building designed, constructed or altered after the effective date of the act, be in compliance with standards which will permit access and use by physically handicapped people. Similar legislation should be enacted by every State, and the standards developed should be a part of the building codes applicable to all public structures.

#### ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS

Even if all physical barriers were removed, however, there would still remain the myriad of barriers erected by the ignorant and unthinking, often in a misguided effort to help and protect the impaired person. For example: a fully qualified Department of Education student was denied permission to participate with her classmates in student teaching because university officials feared that she would be unable to control her class. In order to get an apartment, a man confined to a wheelchair was required to sign a waiver, releasing the landlord and other tenants from liability for injuries resulting from their negligence. A qualified job applicant was rejected because he had a history of heart disease, and the employer feared the effect on the experience rating of the company's group disability plan if it were to hire such a "high risk" employee. A blind man was denied rental of a safety deposit box unless he would agree to joint ownership with someone who was sighted.

Motels and restaurants frequently refuse service to a blind person with a guide dog--or require that the dog be muzzled. The author is in possession of a

letter from a former student who is now an Assistant Attorney General in one of our States, and who happens also to be blind. This brilliant young lawyer, who earned a Master of Laws degree with honors from The George Washington University, recalled that, while he was living in Washington, the most trouble he had in gaining admittance of his guide dog to a public place was on the day he presented himself for admission before the United States Supreme Court! Finally after much argument, he--and his dog--were allowed to approach the bench. It was a "first" for that distinguished tribunal, which has done more to protect individual civil rights than any other agency of government!

The Federal Government has taken the lead in providing employment opportunities for the handicapped within its own structure. There is now, for example, a director of programs for the handicapped within the Federal Civil Service Commission, whose sole function is to further the employment of physically and mentally impaired persons in Federal Government work. Some States have established counterpart programs. But much more should be done; and the greatest need is not for enactment of new laws, but for the repeal of old prejudices. It may be, however, that in some areas at least--transportation, places of public accommodation, and perhaps even employment in businesses and institutions under Federal regulation--there should be a Federal Civil Rights Law, with appropriate sanctions, directed against the discriminations which are daily practiced against the physically handicapped, and whose effects are every bit as demeaning and as incapacitating as they are when directed against other citizens because of

the color of their skin

#### BETTER LAWS NEEDED

Jacobus tenBroek has written extensively and authoritatively about the application of tort law to the disabled, and what he calls their "right to live in the world." (tenBroek, 1966) That right--the legal right to be abroad--demands special protection in the case of the disabled, including enactment of "white cane," "guide dog," and other appropriate legislation, and forthright judicial opinions in tort cases upholding the right of the crippled, the blind, and the infirm to use streets and sidewalks and places of public accommodation in reasonable reliance on their safety, and without being deemed contributorily negligent for having the temerity to make use of them.

Legal determinations of disability also deserve mention. Workmen's compensation laws have been criticized because they operate to discourage successful rehabilitation of the injured workman. A number of things might be done to improve them; for example, Curran has suggested that "compensation benefits . . . be paid for anatomical loss or other impairment of function irrespective of rehabilitation to gainful employment." (1960). In addition, in the author's opinion, workmen's compensation laws which operate to penalize an employer who hires the disabled, should be changed. And finally, although there have been a number of improvements in the procedures for disability determinations under the Social Security Act, there is one which has not yet been made, and which is long overdue--the provision of counsel for applicants at both administrative and judicial levels. In a recent issue of the

*American Bar Association Journal*, Allen Sharp quotes a Federal judge's observation that "it is as important for a Social Security disability claimant to have counsel when he is seeking benefits that may determine the future course of his life as it is for one accused of a crime when his future freedom is at stake." (Sharp, 1969).

John Nagle, Chief of the Washington office of the National Federation of the Blind--the inept basket-weaver, but successful lawyer, referred to earlier--said recently:

We, the organized blind, refuse to accept the traditional role granted by history to the blind person--as tolerated spectators, shunted to the sidelines of life--perpetual welfare dependents--creating nothing, contributing nothing, participating in nothing--denied full and equal status in society's struggle toward a better life . . . As an organization, we are seeking equal treatment, not preferential consideration . . . We reject emphatically and unqualifiedly the sterile security of a protected, custodialized existence--sheltered from life's uncertainties, excluded, too, from life's excitements and adventures, satisfactions, and rewards . . .

No better statement could be made of the principle of normalization.

A beginning then has been made in meeting the real needs of the blind, and of other physically handicapped persons. But there is yet a significant gap in public understanding and acceptance of those needs. A good example of misguided concern for the handicapped is a State



which is currently considering a bill to provide free fishing licenses for the blind. Most blind people can afford to buy fishing licenses. What they would appreciate far more is repeal of the State's law which permits the "management of any public conveyance, place of amusement or public accommodation" to

require that a guide dog have a muzzle. Guide dogs do not need muzzles and sometimes, because they are not used to them, the muzzles reduce their effectiveness as guides. Here indeed is but another illustration of the adage that none is so blind as he who will not see!

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#### OHIO CONVENTION

by  
John Knall

The twenty-fourth annual convention of the Ohio Council of the Blind was held in the Hollenden House Motel, Cleveland, Ohio, October 9, 10 and 11. The host

affiliates were the Mutual Federation of the Blind and the Omega Council of the Blind. The executive board met on the evening of the eighth and continued the

next day. The convention proper opened at 1:30 p.m. A welcoming speech was given by the nationally known mayor of Cleveland, Carl Stokes. He feels that since he has a "handicap" in his blackness he can identify closely with the blind who also suffer a social as well as a physical discrimination. His address was very well received.

The theme of the convention was "Where are we going?" The keynote speaker was Robert Steyer, a member of the Mutual Federation of the Blind. He urged all those who are not doing their part to join those who are working. Mr. Steyer pointed out that when everyone carries his load there is no limit to what can be accomplished. It was a very good pep talk. Reports from the officers, delegates to the NFB Convention, and other routine business consumed the rest of the afternoon.

The NFB film "The Blind Leading the Blind" was aired at 7:00 p.m. Some of the conventioners watched it on the TV sets in their rooms; others in the ballroom where TV was available. Another film featuring President Jernigan's appearance on a panel discussion in Toledo, Ohio was shown on a ballroom screen. Other activities that night were the meetings of the Ohio Blind Vendors Association, the Members-at-Large, the OCB Student Division, and a credit union committee looking into the feasibility of starting one in this State.

The Ohio Council of the Blind has twenty-three affiliates and twenty of them were present at the convention. Reports from the chapters were scattered throughout the convention. Committee reports representing the wide variety of

activities engaged in by the Ohio Council were also heard.

The convention was addressed by Mr. Starner from the Social Security Administration and heard a panel discussion on "Employment Opportunities for the Blind" moderated by NFB First-Vice President Donald C. Capps. Other panelists were Raymond Creech, marriage counselor from Dayton; Robert Steyer, snack bar operator from Cleveland; Dewey Cummings, rehabilitation counselor from Toledo; and Mitchell Darling, an insurance broker from Cleveland.

Later in the afternoon Mr. Steve Halis, treasurer of a large credit union from one of the Cleveland industrial firms talked with us about the advantages of organizing a credit union. A show of hands was asked to see if enough interest had been generated to form our own credit union. Dewey Cummings asked those willing to pledge some money toward starting the credit union to come to his room after the dance Saturday Night. About thirty people pledged \$1200 to get the credit union off to a good start.

After the reading of NFB Resolution 70-05, the following motion was adopted: That each local affiliate annually take up a collection for the tenBroek Memorial Endowment Fund, send it on to OCB, and OCB will send it to the NFB with credit to each local affiliate.

The twenty-fourth annual banquet was held on Saturday evening at 6:30. The toastmaster was Jim Runyon, disc jockey at the NBC station WKYC in Cleveland. Every year the Awards Committee presents a gavel to the most active

affiliate. This year the Dayton Council of the Blind was awarded the gavel for amassing five hundred sixty points. The highest number of points gotten before was two hundred ten, so you can see what a whale of a job they must have done. The award to the blind person of most service to the blind of Ohio was won by Ray Creech, president of the Dayton Council. Memorial plaques were given to Amanda Smith, the widow of our late president, Alfonso Smith, and to Lucille Ross, widow of Clyde Ross. We were entertained by the Mavericks, a barbershop quartet. The lead tenor is the president of the Mutual Federation. Our banquet speaker was Donald C. Capps, who gave us a very fine and rousing speech. It was enjoyed by everyone.

The following officers were elected: president, Raymond Creech, Dayton; first vice-president, Robert Steyer, Lakewood; second vice-president, Thomas Matthews, Jr., Akron; secretary, John Knall, Lakewood; and treasurer, Ivan Garwood, North Baltimore; Two-year terms on the executive committee were won by James Green, Willowick, and Helen Johnson, Toledo.

Delegates to the NFB Convention are Ray Creech and Mrs. Edna Fillinger. Their alternates are Dewey Cummings and Robert Steyer.

The executive board appointed Mrs. Edna Fillinger to serve another year as executive secretary.

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## THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

by

Manuel Urena

[Editor's Note: Mr. Urena is Assistant Director, Iowa Commission for the Blind.]

The American philosopher and father of transcendentalism, Ralph Waldo Emerson, once observed: "Mankind is divided between the party of conservatism and the party of innovation, between the past and the future, between memory and hope." While neither memory nor hope provides by itself a complete index of political action, the distinction expressed is an accurate and deep contrast in human temperament and purpose. Had the author wished, he could have substituted political activity or social movement for mankind, and the authenticity of his statement would have been unaltered. Within the

blind population of our country as well as any other segment of society, there are individuals who resent change and others who welcome it; some who are satisfied with what we have already accomplished and others who look with unbridled eagerness toward tomorrow; because they think we can do better.

In the case of the Federation freely embarking upon its third decade the picture is clear. We are fully cognizant of the proud history of our social movement; and yet daily we are reminded that our mission is a continuous voyage from

bondage to freedom, and from ignorance and custodialism, to equality and independence. In a generation and a quarter, the organized blind have initiated or participated in struggles too numerous to catalog. These have resulted in bringing about changes and governmental reforms which have substantially elevated the standard of living not only for themselves but for all the disadvantaged. Over the last thirty years the National Federation of the Blind has fought, for example, for such milestones as: abolition of lien laws; elimination of responsibility of relatives provisions in welfare; improvement of the Randolph-Sheppard vending stand act to enhance economic opportunities; broadening the scope and the coverage of the Social Security Act, to make it more responsive to the needs of the citizenry and, in many States, pushed through the Legislatures the Model White Cane Law—a Magna Carta for the sightless, an act which makes it unmistakably clear that the blind are citizens too and that they deserve all the privileges and immunities such entitlement bestows. Truly, the Federation has a magnificent heritage. Yet we know that life goes not backwards nor tarries with yesterday but presses irresistibly forward presenting new obstacles and new opportunities.

The first challenge we must confront in our national capacity as well as on the State and local level, is not to permit ourselves to become complacent or fall into the abyss of self-deception. Illusion is a comprehensive ill. The rich man who deludes himself into behaving like a mendicant may preserve his fortune and still fail to gain much happiness. The affluent Nation that conducts its affairs in accordance with rules of another and poorer age also foregoes opportunities. In

misassessing itself, the nation will in time of stress implacably prescribe for itself the wrong remedies. In the years ahead, with the improvements in technology that are sure to come and as man learns more about the world he lives in, problems will arise which will be of an entirely different dimension from those we have faced in the past.

Specifically, I refer to the emerging pattern of services nurtured by professional people in work for the blind. Under the respectable cloak of accreditation, The American Foundation for the Blind, in league with similar public and private agencies rendering services to the blind, seeks to bring all phases of work for the visually disabled beneath the protective umbrella of the National Accreditation Council. In the long run, if this effort were successful, Federal funding might be obtained only with the blessing of the National Accreditation Council. Many of us are already acutely aware of the calamitous effect such a takeover would have upon the lives and fortunes of the blind. We must do what we can to prevent programs for the blind from developing into sterile uniformity promising little hope for prosperity and no escape from the invisible prison. If we are successfully to resist this move by the professionals we must not fall prey to that Aesop's fable about the dog. Having robbed a piece of meat from a butchershop, the dog found himself crossing a river and was sadly deceived by his own reflection. Thinking that it was another dog with another piece of meat, he attempted to make himself master of that also, but in snapping at the supposed treasure, he dropped the bit he was carrying and so lost all. In the struggles that lie before us we must be careful to

separate friend from foe, false paths from broad highways, and never mistakenly grasp for shadows rather than substances.

More than ever before we will have to carry our message into the public arena to take full advantage of the seemingly inexhaustible reservoir of good will which has served the blind so well in the past. Despite these good offices, our task will not be easy; for the contest ahead, in the main, will be waged over the supremacy of ideas which are intangible and initially bear little fruit. Our opponents will be able to array a formidable force against us that will be impressive to the uninformed. I speak with candor and not without a little experience. Recently in Iowa we witnessed what ornate credentials and fancy sounding rhetoric can do to galvanize public opinion.

We must maintain confidence in our cause and faith in the compelling persuasiveness of our message. We must overcome traditional attitudes about the limitations of blindness, and to reach this objective, we have to alter what a famous scholar has labeled, "the conventional wisdom."

In the interpretation of all social life, there is a persistent and never-ending competition between the philosophy which is relevant and the philosophy which is merely traditional or acceptable. In this contest, while a strategic advantage lies with what exists, all tactical advantage is with the acceptable. Audiences of all kinds applaud what they best like, and in public debate the test of audience appeal, far more than the test of truth, comes to influence opinion. Numerous factors contribute to the acceptability of ideas. To a very large extent, we associate truth

with convenience, with what most closely accords with self-interest and well being or promises best to avoid uncomfortable confrontation or unwelcome dislocation. We all find highly acceptable what contributes most to self-esteem. People approve most what they can best understand. Therefore, most men adhere to those ideas which represent their understanding. This is a prime manifestation of vested interest; for a vested interest in understanding is more tenaciously guarded than any other treasure. It is why men react not infrequently with something akin to religious fervor to the defense of what they so laboriously learned. Familiarity may breed contempt in some quarters of human endeavor, but in the sphere of social ideas it is the touchstone of acceptability. Precisely because familiarity is such a crucial element of acceptability, the customary ideas gain respectability and stability.

In the instance of the blind, the issue is doubly difficult. Not only does custom and tradition dictate a distorted and erroneous conception of the consequences of blindness, but the situation is further compounded by the altogether restrictive and warped views of the majority of self-designated experts in the field. Many of the appropriations provided by generous legislatures have been diverted from worthy objectives and instead have been employed to foster a public image of the blind which frustrates advancement and productivity. If we are to alter significantly the conventional wisdom concerning the sightless, we must be ready to win men's minds by example, by patience, by reason, by firmness, and when necessary, by confrontation and political activity. It is evident that the



magnitude of this enterprise cannot be exaggerated and that it will require unstinting effort from all of us.

To corroborate the strong resistance automatically encountered by new ideas, it is only necessary to look within our own house. For eleven years the National Federation of the Blind has been relentlessly pursuing enactment of a measure to modernize the Social Security Act--the disability insurance bill. Early in May, 1970, we learned that our efforts had been repulsed once again in the Ways and Means Committee. In spite of yet another reversal, it is gratifying to note that we came within two votes of reaching a majority in the House Committee, and that perhaps we may still be able to salvage the substantive sections of the measure in the House-Senate Conference Committee.

It is true that men are unequal in their talents and capabilities. Precisely because this is so, inevitably some men fall rather than rise. It is an incumbent obligation upon the more fortunate to prevent their exploitation. All sorts of devices must be invented in this connection by government; starting as humbly as the guarantee of minimum wages, a level of subsistence in conformity with standards of health and decency, and a disability law which will sustain a person during a prolonged and serious crisis. Eleven years ago the Federation could find no partners willing to share the shouldering of this visionary disability statute. Gradually, as the wall of opposition has been scaled, more and more individuals and organizations began to champion our reform--until the light at the end of the proverbial tunnel is plainly visible. We welcome all support; in fact,

we rejoice to have company aboard our Mayflower.

One problem that demands immediate attention is peculiar to the time in which we live. Paradoxically we Americans justifiably take great pride concerning our regard for the individual. Today, fearing to place confidence and reliance upon personal leadership, we are developing a cult of the group. Over the years Federationists have been accused of many shortcomings. Principally, those who have sought to impede our growth and tarnish our prestige referred to the organized blind as the tenBroek machine. Doubtless, in days to come, our leaders will be disparaged, their motives impugned, and our democratic procedures questioned. We must keep vigilant so that these efforts to undermine the fabric of our organization fail. The committee approach to government is totally rejected.

We instinctively believe that the tough issues of the era will be solved by an interfaith conference, an interdisciplinary research team, an interdepartmental committee, or an assembly of wise men. In the case of the blind these sages would in their wisdom convene within the confines of a lighthouse.

This tendency prevails in all sectors of the national endeavor--in the public and private spheres, as well as in the area of manufacturing goods and in the realm of dispensing services. Nowhere is this trend more in evidence than in work for the blind. Here is only a fragmentary list covering the first seven months from the Iowa Commission for the Blind 1968 and 1969 calendar of ostensibly important conclaves which employees of the agency



were urged to attend. January 9-11, Library Meeting in Florida. January 12, Iowa Rehabilitation Association. January 15, State Conference on the Multiply Handicapped. March 4, National Conference on the Rehabilitation of the Handicapped, Kansas City, Missouri. March 4, City Planning Meeting, Des Moines. March 5, Regional Meeting, State Directors, Kansas City, Missouri. March 16, American Library Association Meeting, Chicago. April 10, Governor's Meeting, Program Administration. April 18-20, National Rehabilitation Association, Region 6, St. Louis. April 29, Spring Conference, Council of State Directors, Washington, D. C. May 20, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Institute on Services, Pennsylvania. May 27, Fiscal Directors Meeting, Kansas City, Missouri. June 17, Conference on Rehabilitation Centers. June 24-27, American Library Association Meeting, Kansas City, Missouri.

In order not to prolong the ordeal, permit me to cover the 1969 calendar in a more abbreviated fashion. However, this should not be construed to mean that fewer gatherings were held; in fact, the opposite situation prevailed.

January 30, Vending Stand Meeting, Washington, D. C. February 18-20, Financial Management Workshop, Kansas City, Missouri. April 18-20, National Accreditation Council Meeting, Dallas, Texas. April 20-21, National Industries for the Blind Meeting, Dallas, Texas. April 27-29, President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped Meeting, Washington, D. C. June 24-27, National Citizens Conference on the Rehabilitation of the Disabled and the Disadvantaged. June 19-24, American Association of

Workers for the Blind, Chicago.

I want to reiterate that this catalog does not in any way represent the sum total of such meetings. It is alarming that the number of these assemblies is accelerating and that the length is increasing. The ramifications for improving programs for the blind are bleak.

The customary format for these meetings is to begin early, say, about 9:30 or 10:00 a.m. After the welcoming ceremony, made by a prominent city official, a representative of the sponsoring agency is brought forward to express his gratitude to his colleagues for having taken time off from their valuable work to participate. Next the Federal Government must be heard from and its representative heartily endorses the proceedings. After a twenty-minute coffee break, a leading worker in the field is introduced. He quickly states that he doesn't have much to contribute and usually takes half an hour to prove it. The last speaker of the morning gives forth upon the importance of group dynamics and interaction. The interpersonal contacts made possible through these professional dialogues are incalculable. The featured address will come after lunch. The speaker is billed as very knowledgeable in the field, in all likelihood, a lighthouse keeper or a welfare authority. He spends three quarters of an hour reading dry statistics conclusively demonstrating that rehabilitation closures are rising and that everyone is to be highly commended. Naturally, with better public understanding and financial support the excellent rate of efficiency and performance level could be surpassed. The afternoon is filled with workshops—in the

jargon of the day--intern sessions. The day is concluded with reports to the entire body about the productive laboratory sessions. Of course, these preliminary findings will need further investigation and pilot programs to determine anything definitively. The day's business is adjourned with an eloquent resolution concerning the significance of the meeting and with an agreement to reassemble soon.

Lest anyone judge the foregoing remarks as harsh, here are a few landmark achievements spawned by these gatherings. One research team has completed recording three hundred reels of tape to help the blind detect: rain, a country store, trains, buses, and other sounds which the blind have been able to identify for lo these many years. Another task force has produced an elaborate manual of eating instructions for the sightless. This erudite tome embraces such profound subjects as: how to approach a table, how to sweeten a beverage, and the stabbing and scooping methods for eating. Approximately a year ago, another impressive monograph related to blind males' specific techniques for tying neckties. Still another, *A Reference Manual for Home Teachers Working with the Adult Blind*, prepared by the staff of Community Services for the Visually Handicapped, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, published by the School of Graduate Studies, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, April, 1968, gives detailed information for the following: the four points involved in combing the hair and the seven steps required for the care of the nails. It suggests to the newly blinded that he "practice shaving without a blade until he feels less apprehensive about shaving without the use of sight." [For blind

women it recommended: "If possible, put on make-up before getting dressed." One is tempted to speculate about the nature of the scientific experiments conducted to substantiate this conclusion.] Finally, let me cite one more example: *The Goal is Mobility*, a seventy-page pamphlet published for the National Conference on the Rehabilitation of the Disabled and the Disadvantaged, June, 1969. Among the more edifying comments found between its covers are: "At every street intersection, there is usually a curb." One can hardly dispute this observation. "For the blind it is difficult and arduous, . . . nothing could speak more eloquently for the power of custom over reason than the nationwide failure to substitute ramps for curbs at street corners." Other new aids for the blind endorsed by the brochure include: knurled doorknobs to indicate danger areas and raised elevator control buttons. Surely there must be higher priorities. One might mention a job, a home, and first-class citizenship.

To criticize these gatherings is not to be interpreted as a wholesale indictment of the process of men coming together to engage in profitable discussions and to exchange views. By this method, men have advanced civilization since the dawn of history. This review does reveal that frequency of meetings is often inversely proportional to concrete achievements. Therefore, the negligible solid accomplishments cannot justify the sizable expenditures of tax monies and unavoidable interruptions to the efficient administration of programs for the blind. It is impracticable to retain a semblance of continuity and smooth operation in an agency when policy personnel spend much time away from their place of business attending conclaves. It is safe to assume

more progress would be registered if the decision-making authorities devoted the major share of their energies to the original and paramount task of creating a better-quality life for blind Americans.

Closer to the mark is the observation that this flight into group tactics essentially is the means by which officialdom hedges its bets and distributes irresponsibility—nearly always resulting in the dilution of insight and triumph of mishmash. If we are to survive, we must have ideas, imagination, vision, and courage—ingredients rarely produced in committee deliberations.

Nearly a century ago the British political thinker, John Stuart Mill, philosophized: "The amount of eccentricity in a society has generally been proportional to the amount of genius, mental vigor, and moral courage it has contained. That so few now dare to be eccentric marks the chief danger of the time." If this condition frightened Mill in Victorian England, it should bother us a good deal more today for our national apotheosis of the group means that we systematically crush the eccentrics, the originals, the proud, imaginative, lonely people who provide the main source of new ideas. Everything that matters in our moral and intellectual culture germinates with an individual confronting his own mind and conscience in the serenity of his room. Let us in the years to come bend our efforts toward resolution of the serious and tangible road blocks which bar the egress of the sightless into the open society, and abandon peripheral or ephemeral incidentals which only serve to divert vitality into dead waters.

Whereas the committee approach

potentially could stifle advancement, bogging us down into a suffocating quagmire, we must be equally alert to the danger from what at first appears to be the opposite extreme, specialization. Upon closer examination, it is relatively simple to comprehend the distinction. There is a vast gulf of separation between the individualist who possesses a broad perspective of the future, accompanied by a will to secure the new day, and the specialist who perforce must glance at the world from a confining, restrictive position.

It has been repeatedly shown that a proper division of labor is the truest indicator of a mature and healthy society. The self-sufficient man has little to contribute to the community. The self-sustaining community has little to offer other communities. Both may still be visited in the remote primitive parts of the globe. Indeed, it is still possible to find natural economies so close to marginal subsistence that they cannot afford such specialists as the priest or witch doctor.

Admittedly, specialization enables the extraordinary man to discover and develop his genius and the ordinary human being to discover and develop his individuality. As plainly, although we are apt to lose sight of the fact in our zeal for concentration, specialization may narrow, warp or impoverish the personality. In our own era, specialization has produced the machine tender, the bookkeeper, the technician, and the academician—in short, the hordes of cultural illiterates and expert ignoramuses.

Work for the blind is in the midst of the vanguard. At the present time colleges and universities offering graduate level

studies include such courses as the psychology of blindness in their curriculum. Several grant the degree of masters of peripatology, and the doctorate in vision. It is hard to determine precisely the feats of mental gymnastics required for the doctorate in vision. Perhaps we may glean insight into the matter when we consider that the degree in peripatology is conferred upon those who develop the skills to teach and the ability to move through the environment without the benefit of eyesight. In summary, division of labor invariably leads to excessive division. In work for the blind, we have long since passed the point of diminishing returns.

The ominous implications of this sickness for our society are of grave moment. Perhaps remedial steps can be taken to prevent the disaster considering that the problem still dwells in the future. The blind are not so lucky; for the Orwellian 1984 nightmare is at hand. The only issue remaining to be decided is whether the phenomenon will be permanent and all-enveloping. Modern doctrines in work for the blind seek to standardize behavior for the visually impaired. This is the principal rationale of the manuals already alluded to. Today in many rehabilitation centers, clients are taught a technique for finding dropped coins, a method for rising from a chair, and the list could be extended indefinitely. Last summer a highly qualified graduate student from the University of Iowa applied and was accepted into the School of Labor and Industrial Relations at the University of Illinois. When it was discovered that he lacked eyesight, the acceptance was made conditional on the basis that he would seek and utilize services from the Illinois

Rehabilitation agency. When finally the student submitted to an interview, he was regaled with abuse and informed that his belligerence clearly indicated his need for counseling. Because the Federation intervened in his behalf, the student was able to defend himself against this bureaucratic usurpation of authority. In a recent address, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, offered the following advice: "When a situation demands that information be filtered to the blind... all concerned must repeatedly invoke the old archbishop's rule: 'Is it kind? Is it true? Is it necessary?'"

Aside from the moral and ethical question raised, the total and complete condescension implicit in this declaration, makes it abundantly clear that many of the ghosts from the past still abide within the councils of the rehabilitators. We must inter these relics from antiquity once and for all time. Such an attitude at the present level of man's evolution is abhorrent and intolerable. Lest we fail to remember the heavy price of abject conformity, here is a moving passage from the modern classic novel 1984: *To the future or to the past, to a time when thought is free, when men are different from one another and do not live alone. To a time when truth exists and what is done cannot be undone. From the age of uniformity, from the age of solitude, from the age of Big Brother, from the age of double-think, greetings.* For the sake of ourselves and our posterity we must pay heed.

The blind reject out of hand Plato's ideal society which incorporates the principle of the beehive in which there is



no freedom, no individualism, no desire for self-fulfillment, but only an unthinking devotion to the prescribed duty. This concept is repugnant to the human spirit, whether it comes dressed in the guise of the patronizing lighthouse keepers or in the cloak of benevolent social workers, or in the garb of rehabilitation practitioners who would filter the world for us. We have not traversed our long journey only to exchange the former ward position for the equally repulsive status of pseudoscientific specimens.

Man's recent breakthrough into space portends a renaissance of the restive human drive for knowledge. Many wise men contend that the Golden Age of a civilization coincides with that people's supremacy in frontier penetration. These scholars insist that as the pioneer movement begins, the literary genius of a country is liberated. The writer cannot escape from his surroundings. In classical Greece we have Homer. Elizabethan England offers Shakespeare. The American experience boasts Mark Twain. All of these men emerged during the formative period of their respective cultures. If this theory of progress is valid, then this generation of Federationists may be thankful indeed. We must constantly keep in mind that great opportunities never come unaccompanied. Always they come alloyed with enormous challenges and heavy burdens of responsibility. Nevertheless, if we execute the job at hand in a manly manner, future generations of visually disabled men and women may look back upon this era as the beginning of our true emancipation.

President John F. Kennedy said: *The responsibility of our time is nothing less than to lead a revolution which will be*

*peaceful if we are wise enough; human, if we care enough; successful, if we are fortunate enough—but a revolution which will come whether we will it or not. We can affect its character. We cannot alter its inevitability . . . America is, after all, the land of becoming—a continent which will be in ferment as long as it is America, a land which will never cease to change and grow. We are as we act. We are the children and heirs of revolutions and we fulfill our destiny only as we advance the struggle which began (long ago) and which continues today.*

Let us in the organized blind movement be of good cheer and bend our backs to undertake the great adventure. We assert that our aim is not to limit but to fulfill ambition. We would rather expand life than to suspend it in a monotonous and drone-like order. Finally, we want what all free men have always longed for, the right to self-realization and to achieve the ultimate of our potential.

Despite the perils and tribulations of our epoch, we are glad to be alive. Every civilization is like a surf-rider carried forward on the crest of a wave. The wave impelling us ahead has barely commenced its run. Those who thought it was already slackening spoke centuries too soon. We are poised now in the precarious but exhilarating balance that is the essence of real living--the antithesis of mere existence. Behind us lie the reefs we have already passed. Beneath us the great wave humps its back still higher from the sea. Ahead, we cannot tell. We are too far out to see the unknown lands. Secure in the knowledge that our cause is just and our integrity unbesmirched, we have little to fear. It is enough to ride the unknown wave.

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## MONITOR MINIATURES

*Playboy Magazine* has recently announced that it has been added to the list of publications produced in Braille by the Library of Congress, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Only the fiction and non-fiction text will appear in the Braille edition.

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The *Washington Post* on October 20, 1970 reported that the U. S. Postal Service said recently that talking magazines—sound recordings of current news for the blind—rate the same fee and same speedy handling as printed newspapers and magazines get by paying for it.

This was a reversal of a ten-year-old policy that required producers of talking magazines to prepay fees to get the special service. Materials for the blind that do not require special handling go through the mails without charge.

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According to the most recent statistics released by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, the average monthly grant in Aid to the Blind for the country as a whole was one hundred dollars and ten cents, being paid to 80,300 recipients. The average grants paid by individual States varied greatly, all the way from one hundred fifty-nine dollars and five cents in California to fifty-four dollars and sixty-five cents in Mississippi. Only twelve of the fifty States paid an average grant in excess of one hundred dollars. The proportion of the population receiving Aid to the Blind for

the nation as a whole (persons aided per 100,000 population age eighteen and over) was sixty-one. Here, again, the rate for individual States varied greatly, ranging from Mississippi with one hundred fifty recipients of Aid to the Blind per 100,000 of the general population down to Connecticut with only twelve.

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Now it is possible to obtain reading material for the blind from one source. The information is available in the American Foundation for the Blind's new publication "Sources of Reading Materials for the Visually Handicapped." It consists of twenty-two separate sections, each on a specific aspect of blind readers' needs. Some of the subjects covered are Braille publishers, sources of Braille music, and large type periodicals. The publication may be obtained from the American Foundation, Fifteen West 16th Street, New York, N. Y. 10011.

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The War on Poverty—is it a war which the American people are losing? This War has been a major casualty of the War in Southeast Asia. Some 24 million Americans (twelve per cent of the total population) are still poor. Only two out of five of the poor are even covered by public assistance, niggardly as that program usually is in most places. The President's Family Assistance Program, as proposed to the Congress, would guarantee a family of four \$1,600 a year—an amount which is less than one half of the poverty level of around \$3,500 for that many persons. As



a people, we'll have to do better than that--or lose the War on Poverty.

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Improving the Braille system for blind readers by use of computers for translation is being studied by the Office of Research and Engineering Services at the University of Kentucky. The question is whether there now exists equipment and technology that will permit any typist to prepare grade two Braille quickly and in duplicate copies. While probably both the technology and equipment now exist, it must now be determined how to program a computer so that it will take the input from the typewriter, translate it into grade two Braille, and store the information to be embossed later on Braille paper. The project is being financed through a grant from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

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Frederick Picard, a veteran diplomat who helped establish relief programs for victims of the Nigerian Civil War, has taken on new duties as Executive Director of the Catholic Guild for All the Blind in Newton, Massachusetts. Mr. Picard is forty-two years of age.

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Governor Sargent of Massachusetts recently announced an executive order that a "flat grant program" would give the average welfare family of four an annual income of \$3,820. Grants for "special needs" ranging from seasonal clothes to furniture, are virtually abolished under the plan. At present the new program applies only to those receiving Aid to Families

with Dependent Children.

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The "Great Documents Series, Americana Edition" has recently been published by the Twin Vision Publishing Division of the American Brotherhood for the Blind. The contents, both in Braille and inkprint, include the Pledge to the American Flag, the American's Creed, and several patriotic songs. One of the interesting features is data concerning each of the fifty States--when admitted to the Union, the capital, the motto, the area, the flower, the tree, the bird, the derivation of the name, and the nickname of the State.

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The Center for the Blind in Tel-Aviv, Israel, recently wrote the National Federation of the Blind: "We are delighted to receive your letter authorizing us to translate, and to distribute for publication, material which appears in your magazine, *The Braille Monitor*. We are most appreciative of your willingness to let us use this excellent material. Certainly, the fine example set by your organization, as well as the progress reported in your magazine, can be of great inspiration to our blind citizens and can help us more effectively educate the Israeli public to the abilities and basic equality of the blind." These gracious expressions are deeply appreciated by the officers of the NFB.

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Joseph S. Piela of Chicopee, Massachusetts was recently installed as president of the Greater Springfield Association of the Blind. The installation

of the new officers was made by Miss Anita O'Shea, who is the State president of the Associated Blind of Massachusetts and an Executive Committee member of the National Federation of the Blind.

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The South Carolina Aurora Club of the Blind has just published a beautiful brochure for new members, entitled "To Be An Auroran." Following words of welcome to the new members, there follows a history of the club with its goals and objectives, the services of the State club and its chapters, material concerning membership and attendance, and some of the major accomplishments of Aurora. *The Braille Monitor* congratulates the Aurora Club of the Blind on a job exceedingly well done and offers a hint to other State affiliates of the NFB that they, too, could produce their own brochure.

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*The White Cane*, publication of the Washington State Association of the Blind, reports that there will be a half hour weekly radio program of music and items of public interest about blindness and blind people, announcements and information to blind listeners. The State Services for the Blind agency is seeking to make the program a cooperative effort with other organizations of and for the blind participating.

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The Ohio Council of the Blind *Bulletin* tells us that since 1911 the organization of telephone workers, called Telephone Pioneers of America, has been active in community services all over the

Nation. Membership requirement is twenty-one years of service in the telephone industry. Besides getting together socially for good times, these "phone" people have given millions of hours to serving in many capacities in their own localities. Among these numerous projects are collecting eye glasses for the needy, transcribing books into Braille, servicing talking book machines, tutoring under-privileged children in their school work, designing and building therapy aids for the retarded. These are only a few of the diversified activities that truly bring life to their motto: "United to serve others."

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The All America & Allied Services, 8 Sterling Avenue, Yonkers, New York 10704, announces that it is an agency for the sale of the RCA Audio Center, Model RCZ-375. This set receives all the AM and FM radio stations, plus the sound portion of all UHF and VHF television channels in the area. It has four visual dials which have Braille station markings; four rocker switches with Braille markings; and is portable, weighing seven pounds. The cost is sixty-nine dollars and ninety-five cents, plus two dollars to cover shipping charges.

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A Federal District Court in Minnesota ruled that Minnesota cannot require a ninety-day waiting period before granting Aid to Families with Dependent Children. The court held that Minnesota welfare regulations conflicted with the Social Security Act which provides for the granting of aid for children in need because of the "continued absence from the home" of a supporting parent.

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Recently John F. Nagle, Chief of the Washington Office of the National Federation of the Blind, received a letter of commendation from the U. S. Army's Walter Reed Hospital for his visit and meeting with the blind patients there, talking over their individual problems and offering suggestions for resources designed to help in solving those problems.

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A year-long study by the Committee for National Health Insurance, a one hundred-member group organized by the late Walter Reuther, president of the United Auto Workers, comes up with a plan which would provide the following services for all Americans: all necessary physicians' services; hospital or other institutional care up to one hundred and twenty days per illness; dental services for children up to fifteen years of age; drugs provided by hospitals, group practice plans, and for chronic conditions requiring prolonged drug therapy; psychiatric care for ambulatory patients and up to forty-five days of hospital care; and supporting services, including such things as optometrists and ambulance transportation. It is to be expected that some comprehensive health plan, available to all Americans rather than to just those over sixty-five years of age, will not be too long in coming.

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Approximatey 225,000 handicapped children throughout the country received special educational services during the 1968-69 school year through grants of more than \$54 million provided by

Federal programs. In addition, 41,000 staff members in special education programs received inservice training and 16,500 new staff members were employed with these grants. The handicapped benefiting from these grants and services include mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, speech impaired, visually handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, crippled, or other health impaired children who require special education.

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On September 14, 1970, Clarence Collins, president of the Tar Heel State Federation of the Blind, and Mrs. Robert M. Staley, president of the Charlotte chapter, were interviewed by Doug Mays on the "Noon Report," a locally popular TV program. The occasion was the upcoming first annual convention of the State affiliate, reported in full in the November issue of *The Braille Monitor*.

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The American Rehabilitation Foundation has been conducting classes to instruct airport service employees in ways of handling the handicapped. They learn that there is a difference in handling someone in a wheelchair who must be transferred from one place to another and the blind person who needs a guide. They learn how to let the blind take their arms and how to set a pace for walking. The program has been extended to twenty-five cities and includes hotels and restaurants as well as airports.

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Wayne Carpenter, writing in the San

Diego (California) *Union* reports that Harold Claypoole of that city, says he's invented a volt-ohm meter that can be operated in total darkness. If all goes well, he intends to manufacture the meter, along with a similarly designed meter for capacitors, out of his garage. Claypoole, who is blind, thinks that sighted as well as blind people interested in electronics will find the instrument useful.

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The National Church Conference of the Blind held an annual four-day meeting this July at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. The conference, a nondenominational organization of blind and partially sighted evangelical Christians, drew participants from twenty-one States and featured talks, Bible studies, and reports of blind organizations around the country as well as a tour of The American Printing House for the Blind. Reverend Robert Means, moderator of the conference, charges that churches ignore the blind; one of the major purposes of the conference is to increase communication between churches and the blind.

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Sightless residents of Cleveland Metropolitan Housing Authority's developments will soon find it easier to use elevators. Braille elevator plates made at Cloverbrook Home & School for the

Blind in Cincinnati have numbers designed for both inside and outside the elevator as well as standard elevator terms such as "up," "down," "door," and "alarm."

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Brother John Soehnel, S.M., member of the Dayton Council of the Blind, sent the editors of *The Monitor* a description of the Marian Library for the Blind and its biennial pilgrimage and convention. The organization was founded by its president, Majella Rigdon, and it circulates a quarterly magazine, *Marian Crusader*, in Braille and on tape. Gifts from Hubert Smit of Ways and Means for the Blind are largely responsible for the tape edition. The Marian Library for the Blind promotes the spiritual and social interests of blind Catholics and has an international audience for its publication.

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The Nevada Federation of the Blind held its annual convention in Reno at the Mapes Hotel on October 9, 10, 11. The following officers were elected and installed at that convention: president, K. O. Knudson, Las Vegas; first vice-president, Jean Savage, Reno; second vice-president, Tommy Lee, Reno; secretary-treasurer, Audrey Tait, Las Vegas; chaplain, Paul Quick, Las Vegas; board members are Carl Clontz, Hawthorne; Ella Council, Las Vegas; Cleo Fellers, Las Vegas; and Jim Osmond, Reno

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